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OUR WORKING-GIRLS AND HOW TO HELP THEM

**WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO CLUBS AND CLASSES**

BY

FLORA LUCY FREEMAN

**AUTHOR OF "POLLY," "A CHAIN OF THOUGHT FOR THE CHURCH'S
YEAR," "THE PATIENCE OF PEARLA"**



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IN DEEP GRATITUDE FOR HIS EXAMPLE
AND COUNSEL.

We shall undoubtedly find great difficulties and discouragements in work of this kind, but do not let us be tempted to relax our efforts on account of them, or to lose our faith in human nature.

When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison-walls to be,
I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to Thee.

If everything connected with our work should apparently go wrong, we may be quite sure that, if only it is done in union with GOD, in the end all the evil will work out for good.

F. L. F.

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Our Working Girls

CHAPTER I

THE NEEDS OF THE WORKING-GIRL

“ ‘Where is Abel thy brother?’ is the first question that will meet every one of us before the throne of God.”

THE working-girl needs especial help and guidance at the time when her life as a wage-earner begins. At fourteen she is not much more than a child, her character is still unformed, and her temptations are very great. How can we best help her? Surely by providing her with some place where she can find good influence, sympathy, amusement, and instruction. All these she should find in a properly worked Girls' Club. Although there is still prejudice in some quarters against these most useful institutions, they have at last won an honoured place in the field of philanthropic work.

Of course nothing is free from the danger of

abuse, but it is no exaggeration to say that thousands of girls are kept, by the happy home-life of their evening clubs, from falling into sin. It is impossible to overstate the terrible temptations to which girls, especially those in service on their weekly evening out, are exposed when away from their homes in a strange town. We must all be well aware of this fact, but how very little is being done to remedy the evil ! We are content to spend thousands a year in trying to reclaim the fallen, but very little in comparison, either in money or work, is spent in trying to keep girls from falling.

In London and in some of our larger towns much good work is going on, yet in our smaller provincial towns little or nothing is done in club-work. Guilds and associations for girls are only slowly waking up to the fact that if they hold up, as they are bound to do, a high standard of purity of life before their members, they ought also to help the young, the weak, and the frivolously inclined to attain to it by providing them with a place where they can have innocent amusement and respectable companionship. A monthly social meeting cannot possibly do much for girls whose homes are such that they cannot spend their evenings in them, or who are living in lodgings away from home. Unless they have friends or a club to go to they must, of necessity, spend the evenings in the streets, the dancing saloon, or the music hall,

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One girl, who had fallen into very grievous sin, told us that had there been some club for girls in her neighbourhood when she first went to service it would most likely have saved her. "For," she said, "I hadn't one friend in the place, so I used to go to the music hall on my evening out—it was warm and bright there, and one couldn't tramp the streets till ten o'clock—and after a bit I made acquaintance with some bad men, and it was all up with me."

We all know these sad things continually happen, and yet how many, even of the clergy, look upon a Girls' Club as quite unnecessary in their parish, and a mere fad of some of their workers, while clubs for the men and boys are regarded as of supreme importance.

Story after story could be told of many and many a girl who "wanders and falls" for want of what is practically an evening home. We should like to take some of those who say that these clubs destroy home-life to see what the home-life of great numbers of these girls really is. Drunkenness, dirt, and misery are too often its characteristics; and even at its best the tiny, stuffy, and overcrowded sitting-room, generally used also as a bedroom, can hardly be regarded as a place of recreation for a girl who wants exercise for her limbs, which are cramped and stiff with long hours of work.

We read an essay written by a factory girl on the benefit of belonging to a Girls' Club. She wrote that the need of clubs was very

great, for it was seldom that a working-girl had a good home (a world of sad experience surely lay behind those words), and even if she had, she still would need some amusement in the evening, and also she would have every opportunity there of learning useful things. At one of the London Club Exhibitions the competition which struck most strongly one of the few men who were present was the one in invalid cookery. A suitable dinner for an invalid had to be served for sixpence, and the trays containing an appetising little meal of beef-tea, fish, and a pudding were deservedly admired. Girls have often said to us, "Life is a different thing to me since I joined the club. I have so many things to think about and to do now that I don't get into mischief like I used."

It is a matter of much regret that a large number of so-called clubs, generally parochial ones, are open only on one night in the week for a drill class, a dancing evening, or a sewing class. Now this is but a very poor substitute for a club open five nights a week; but is it really the want of a room which stands in the way of these clubs being open, at any rate, three nights in the week? Sometimes, of course, the parish room or school is used by other organisations on most nights, but far more often the want of workers, or the lack of zeal in the workers, is the real obstacle. People say: "It is so tiring being out so many nights, I'm sure one night is fag enough." Now if only

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the knowledge that this work is in the truest sense *preventive* work could be burnt into our very souls, if we remind ourselves that perhaps our club evenings may lead to one sin less being committed against God, that they may save one poor weak child from moral shipwreck, we shall not mind wearing ourselves out, if need be, body and soul, in the service of our sisters.

The needs of the working-girl are multifarious. She has a right to demand fair payment for her work, and that her work should be done under healthy conditions. When we find that a girl is being unfairly dealt with we should try to mend matters. It is always an unpopular and unpleasant task to try to reform anything, but we must not mind that. For instance, some years ago a club-leader found that one of her girls was working as general servant to an acquaintance of her own, but sleeping out. She noticed how thin and ill the girl was looking, and on inquiry she found that the poor "general" could not possibly pay for her lodging, her clothes, and her supper, which she did not get at her place, on the few shillings a week that she earned. Her mistress refused to allow her to sleep in, and at last the girl was persuaded to give notice. The mistress was furious, and both the reputation of the club-leader and of her club suffered much at her hands. Surely, though, it was well worth while, for the poor, half-starved little drudge, we are told, is now earning good wages, and has

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improved in every way. There are some girls, like this one, who are slightly wanting in brain power, and are far too terrified of their mistresses to dare to give notice unless backed up as in this case by their club-leader.

A particularly oppressed kind of girl-worker is the unfortunate "penitent" after her two years in a Home. She has, of course, to take what she can get; and although, no doubt, those in authority at such Homes do their very best to send them to suitable places, yet in many cases they do not know what a slave the girl will be in some lodging-house or boarding-house, and often they are quite unaware that the place to which they are sending the girl is not a private house. It is almost impossible to find out by correspondence alone what a place is really like. Boarding-house and lodging-house keepers are so hard put-to-it to get servants that they resort to all sorts of ingenious devices to get servants from these Homes. The lodgers are alluded to as "one or two paying guests whom we have now and then," and all sorts of promises are made as to time given to the girl for attending to her religious duties and going out only in the afternoons, which are never fulfilled. The girl is probably miles away from the Home where she has been trained, and if she leaves her place she will forfeit her outfit, so her case is sometimes hard indeed.

It is very difficult to make girls understand that if they are to do well in service they must

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first go as under-servants, and properly learn their business as any other trade has to be learnt. To many a girl the idea of starting as a "general" and having no older servant over her, and getting through her work anyhow at her own sweet will, is so much more attractive than being an under-servant for some years. We can help girls in the matter of obtaining suitable work by showing them the advantages of a properly acquired trade, and by giving them sensible advice on the subject.

Proper exercise and recreation will help to put right the physical ills attendant on hard work, such as narrow chests and round shoulders, The Girls' Club will give them opportunities for drill and dancing.

Very great care ought to be taken of girls going from the country to situations in our large towns. However carefully arrangements may be made for having them met, some mistake may be made. It is a good thing sometimes to ask girls what they would do if they found themselves landed in a large town with very little money and perhaps having the wrong address of their situation, or having lost it. A class of country girls rarely give the answer which a class of town girls would instantly give, "Ask a policeman." We cannot tell them too often that, if in such a position, they should ask that official to direct them to a G.F.S. Lodge, or a Y.W.C.A. Home, if there should be one of these in the neighbourhood; failing these

institutions they should go to the nearest vicarage and ask for advice as to what they should do. A great safeguard for girls now is the presence of an agent of the National Vigilance Association at each of the large town stations, who wears the badge of the society on her arm. She is there to help any friendless person.

We were very thankful indeed for this help once when taking a girl to a Home on our way through London. By some mistake there was no one to meet her at the station. We had to catch a train immediately on to Brighton, and with much gratitude we placed her in the care of one of these workers, who took her to her destination.

Country girls are extraordinarily simple in some things as compared with those who are brought up in towns. They would most likely at once put their trust, if stranded alone at a station, in any apparently kind person who offered to help them. They listen with surprise to warnings against trusting unknown women at a station if they were in a fix, or did not know their way. It is easy to see how quickly such girls might, if unprotected, be entrapped and taken to bad houses.

A great many people are absolutely at sea and helpless in any kind of emergency. A common-sense examination is therefore a good thing to give at the club sometimes. "What would you do if——?" etc., etc.

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In the succeeding chapters we shall try and show, though very imperfectly, how we may best provide for the various needs of our girls. If we are, as we learn more about these needs, almost inclined to draw back, knowing as we do our own weakness and insufficiency and the many-sidedness of the task, let us encourage ourselves with Jeremy Taylor's axiom, "Do valiantly, and hope confidently, and wait patiently."

CHAPTER II

THE STARTING OF A CLUB

“Get thy tools ready, God will find the work.”

It is by no means easy to start a non-parochial club; that is, one intended to gather in those girls who are at present outside all Church organisations, such as guilds, classes, etc. Such a club should eventually, if well worked, become interwoven with these.

Let us take, for instance, the starting of a club for business-girls. How easy it seems! We have a number of notices printed, and we give them away to the girls in the shops, accompanied with a personal invitation. Each girl to whom we speak is most polite and says how pleased she will be to come, but alas! her interest is but assumed for business purposes. In trade it is a rule of the Medes and Persians that a customer must never be offended. If we ask her why she has not appeared at the club, a string of polite excuses will be offered to us.

We have scarcely ever known girls come to a club through the medium of notices distributed

at their places of work. There must be some connecting link, some sort of introduction before girls will come to spend their evenings among strangers. After finding, by painful experience, the futility of leaving these notices, we managed to obtain an introduction to one of the forewomen in a large house of business, then invited her to tea, explained our plans to her, and asked her to help us. This answered well, and she brought a good many of her shop-girl friends with her ; they, in their turn, brought their friends who were employed at other shops, and thus we were enabled to make a small beginning.

Quite the best way of learning to know the "young-ladies-in-business" class is to ask them to a *tête-à-tête* tea with us at our own house. They are pleased at the compliment implied by the invitation, and will open out to us far more in this way than in any other.

A great trial in this sort of club is that when, after much trouble, we have learnt to know and care for the girls, they often leave the town for some place of business elsewhere, and we have to begin the building up of our club all over again. Still, it is by no means labour lost, for we often receive letters afterwards telling us how much benefit the girls who have left the town received from the club, and that they should always remember the teaching and the help received at the church.

The discouragement so often felt by workers

at the failure of any response to their invitations would be spared if, as their first step, they spoke to the manager of the shop, and asked for an introduction to one or two of the forewomen, whose further acquaintance they should at once cultivate.

A social evening, with acting, dancing, and games, is the best start for a club of this kind. Our difficulties are increased if we have only a schoolroom, or some rather rough or bare apartment for our club, as shop-girls are accustomed to comfortable sitting-rooms. Except in the smaller and lower class shops it is of little use to ask those girls who "live in" to join a club. They get up all kinds of social amusements among themselves in their own large, well-furnished sitting-rooms, and therefore do not need a club.

Another difficulty is the lateness of the hour at which many of these girls leave off work, especially at sale times. It is not much use opening a club for them before 8.30 p.m., or closing before 10 p.m., or even later.

A great deal of tact is needed in giving the invitation. The girls nearly always ask, "What is the subscription?" and if it is a merely nominal one, they are inclined to suspect charity or "kidding," that is, getting at them for religion. Of course our strongest reason for having a club at all is, or ought to be, to lead them to religion, and thus to help them to keep straight; but if they suspect this motive, none of

the frivolous-minded girls will come (and these are in the majority) ; therefore we must imitate S. Paul, who was able to tell some of his converts, " I caught you with guile." Thus, in answer to the question, " What do you want us for ? what is the good of a club for us ? " we can quite truly reply, " We want to make you happy in the evenings, and to get to know you." We want to do all this, but far more besides. It is often very lonely and sad for girls who come as strangers to some business house in a large town, if they have been brought up religiously, and to such as these a club is especially welcome.

Another question is often asked : " Are the girls at your club all business-girls like us ? " We had to answer this question in the negative only a short time ago, and our questioner then said very decidedly : " We cannot meet girls in service ; we are of a higher class than they are, and we couldn't possibly mix up with them." (Shop-girls would appear to be quite free from any taint of the present-day socialism about which we hear so much.)

Personally we strongly object to a club for one class only of the community. Such a club is unhealthy for the girls, whose narrow outlook becomes still more contracted, and it is so much more dull than a mixed club. Still, it seems to be almost a necessity to have separate clubs for the two ends of the social scale—for the shop-girls, and for the very rough,

almost hooligan girls. Nothing, other than religious motives, will induce them to mix ; and as a very large proportion of these girls go neither to church nor to chapel, any desire for religion will be long in coming. In a club where nearly all the girls are connected with the church there is very little difficulty in their meeting pleasantly and happily together, and this is, to our mind, the kind of club which proves most satisfactory.

In starting a club the name we give to it is most important. For an extra-parochial club it is best not to call it by the name of the parish church, but simply, "Recreation Club," "Speedwell Club," "Sunshine Club," or by any name we like which does not convey a directly religious impression.

We have been told by superintendents of clubs belonging to, and bearing the name of one or other of the two great societies for helping girls, that the very name of a society is quite sufficient to prevent many girls from joining the club.

When we are starting a club for girls of a different type, we should be careful to avoid calling it a "Rough Girls' Club." A club in a provincial town was nearly wrecked at its outset by an advertisement in the local paper asking for the gift of a piano for the new "Rough Girls' Club" which was to be started in the town. The girls are no doubt rough, but they do not like being advertised to the world as such. It is better not to call our club, "Laundry

Girls' Club," or "Club for Young Women in Service," but simply "Club for Working Girls," or shorter still, "Girls' Club." The girls want to get quit of the associations of work when they come to their club, and not, by its very name, to be continually reminded of them.

Girls in service who have an evening out once a week badly need a club; above all if they are away from their own homes. How are we to get at them? We once tried leaving notices of the club for the servants at each house in the neighbourhood, but not one put in an appearance. It is evident that, like the shop-girls, they require some sort of introduction first.

A notice of the club should be put up near the entrance of the church with which the club is connected, and sometimes at evening service, or at a mission, we might sit at the west end of the church and speak to girls, who are strangers, as they go out, and invite them to the Bible-class and to the club.

Another plan is to call at boarding-houses and lodging-houses (first obtaining the permission of the vicar of the parish), ask to see the proprietor, send in a visiting-card, and then explain to her the objects of the club and give her a printed notice of it for her servants.

Many girls from the country are given letters of introduction by their own vicars to the vicar of some church in the town to which they are going. We cannot be too particular in asking for such letters for our own girls when they leave

for some distant place. If it is impossible to find out to which parish they belong, a note to the G.F.S. Associate of that town or district always meets with a kind response. (This has been our invariable experience.)

All these little plans involve a good deal of trouble, which we shall not mind taking if we remind ourselves that many of the girls may persevere in their religious duties through the help of the club, and that others, who have at present no religion, may become members of the Church through the personal influence brought to bear upon them at their club.

The organisation of a parochial mixed club is quite plain-sailing. We must ask for the names of all girls over fourteen in the Sunday School, the Bible-classes and the Guild. They will welcome the thought of having a club.

We can also, when walking about the streets of the parish, ask any girl we happen to meet to join the club if she does not already belong to one, and if she will give us her name and address we can call at her house and ask for her mother's permission. Many of our most regular and steadfast club members have been brought to the club in this way.

How are we to find out if those whom we invite bear good characters ?

In several ways. First, we can judge so much from the girl's appearance, dress, and manners ; then a visit to her home will give us further knowledge of her ; and lastly, we have

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always found that our own girls will not have a girl of shady reputation in the club, and this is our greatest safeguard. If we are ignorant of their true characters, our committee girls will soon enlighten us.

It is not a good plan to have a club exclusively for confirmed girls, for we have known of girls asking to be confirmed in order to join the club !

Another successful way of attracting new girls is to have a social evening, and to allow each girl to invite a friend.

Sometimes a visit to a laundry or factory brings in fresh girls, but not often, although such a visit gives great pleasure to any girl of our acquaintance who is employed there. She will be very proud to show us over " her place."

We experience sad disappointments in the non-appearance of many of those whom we have invited. We should remember that girls generally say " Yes " to any request if we only talk long enough, although they have not the slightest intention of keeping to their word. Their ready compliance comes partly from politeness, partly from a desire to avoid being bothered.

Another point of importance in the starting of a club is to impress on those girls we happen to know well the duty of friendliness, and upon our workers that they must avoid any shade of condescension in their manner, and that they must shake hands cordially with everybody.

We must be very definite about our first

evening ; some amusement should be arranged for each half-hour ; for if our first evening is dull the girls will not come again. Remember that they do not all like the same thing, so, if possible, have part of the time for acting and singing, part for dancing, and part for games ; then every one will be pleased.

Lastly, and most important of all, we should pray much over the starting of our club. On our way to it we might say the collect, " Prevent us, O LORD, in all our doings with Thy most gracious favour," etc. ; then, having made all preparations as well as we possibly can, we need not worry ourselves or be in despair over small numbers:

We remember saying, in a depressed tone, to our vicar : " Only eight girls at the class last evening " (it was a week-night one), and his cheering reply, " Eight ! why, that is the very same number that was saved in the ark."

One stormy night, too, a club-worker was sorely tempted not to go down to her class, which was held at a club-room a long distance away. Suddenly the thought of our LORD spending a long time in teaching one poor, ignorant Samaritan woman, and Nicodemus, who came to Him by night, flashed across her mind. She immediately started, and she had great cause to be thankful afterwards for having taken this particular class of three girls that night.

An excellent opportunity for the start of a

parochial club is as an outcome of a mission. In order to gather the girls together for the mission, it is a good plan to ask them to come for the hour before the late mission service to some room near the church, give them a cup of tea and a talk, and afterwards persuade them to come on with us to the service. These girls will probably form the nucleus of a future club.

This chapter seems rather lengthy and tedious, but we have to remember that the proverb so true of many undertakings is true also of the formation of a club: "C'est le premier pas qui coûte."

CHAPTER III

PAROCHIAL AND NON-PAROCHIAL CLUBS

"Adding sunlight to daylight, making the sad happy and the happy happier."

It is often asked which kind of club succeeds the best. The answer is that both have special advantages and disadvantages. Personally we should always prefer a club connected closely with some particular church, because naturally there is a much stronger religious feeling about it, and religion, of necessity, comes first in it. When a choice has to be made between the social work of the club and the attending of a mission or of a special service, there can be no sort of question as to which is to have the preference.

There is generally a much more family sort of feeling in a church club than in a non-parochial one, because many of the members and all the workers are bound together by the tie of membership in the same church. Briefly, the advantages of a parochial club are these: Firstly: the influence of the clergy with the

girls; secondly: the religious atmosphere which should always be found there; thirdly: a room for the club can usually be had free of charge, thus doing away with the endless struggle to pay rent.

The drawbacks to such clubs are these. In many parishes it is impossible to get a room for the club more than once a week, which is of little use. Probably, by arrangement and a small gratuity to the caretaker, much more use might be made of schoolrooms. A parish club lacks the element of permanency which the other kind of club generally possesses. A new vicar may come who does not approve of clubs, and then the work of years may be swept away. There must always be this element of want of permanency about parish organisations, unless the club, which we will suppose to be managed by an honorary head, strengthens itself by forming a committee.

We should strongly recommend any one starting a Girls' Club in a large town parish, if she is the honorary head of it, to form a committee to support the club, otherwise she will be entirely at the mercy of one man, namely, the vicar of the parish, and should he, for any reason, take a dislike to her or to her methods of work, he could ask her summarily to resign. A case in point was that of a worker we knew, who after nine years' work was forced to resign, in spite of the vicar having shown, both in word and in writing, apparently sincere appreciation

of her work, going even so far as to write strongly worded expressions of gratitude to her. Now, if she had been backed up by a committee, this worker could not have been forced to resign without any good or just reason except the influence, working behind the vicar, of persons opposed to and jealous of the club. This incident points to that scourge of all earnest work—emulations and jealousies. After long years of work we know full well that we have to reckon with these difficulties. They are different in Church clubs from those in non-parochial clubs, but none the less distressing.

Although, as in our own case, such a step as the formation of a committee as a protection and as a security for the continuance of our club is quite needless, backed up as we are by a vicar whom we can entirely trust, yet, even so, looking to the future of the club, more permanence would be given to it. The club-leader might have to leave the town where she is working, and in numberless instances, where the club is a one-man affair, that club comes to an end ; but if we have our committee of men and women, keenly interested in the work, the club is placed on a different footing.

In spite of the serious drawbacks and jealousies which sometimes beset parochial clubs—and we have suffered more than most people from them—we should still prefer to work under a vicar in connection with some particular church.

The non-parochial, or undenominational club as many prefer to call it, undoubtedly gets hold of girls who would probably keep away from any club which appeared to be connected with religion. We say, "appeared to be connected," for we are thankful to say many so-called "undenominational" clubs are doing, quietly and unobtrusively, splendid work for the Church. They are, too, unless mismanaged, generally permanent. The head is in most cases a paid worker, consequently she is bound to look after the club in a way which could not be done by an honorary head who has, very likely, home and social duties to attend to, although, as far as it is possible, an honorary worker ought to feel even more bound to regular and conscientious work, as she has taken it up, not of obligation, but of her own free will.

It is possible to gain much wider sympathy and more financial support for an undenominational club. Much better results can be produced in the way of industrial work, because the girls will not be subjected to the many interruptions common to the Church club, especially at the beginning of the year, when the club-room is continually wanted for treats and entertainments.

The demerits are obvious—the extreme difficulty of creating any sort of religious atmosphere in the club, or any sense of religious duty amongst the members. Many of these clubs have one or perhaps two Bible-classes a

week, but often these are very poorly attended, even when the club-roll numbers between one and two hundred girls. The attendance at these classes often stops there, without resulting in the practice of the duty of worship, or of desire for Church membership.

We have often heard it said by workers at these clubs, "It seems almost hopeless to persuade any of the girls to take the smallest interest in religion." A few of these clubs have a chaplain who regularly holds classes and Guild meetings in the club-room, but even this does not seem to form a strong religious bond among the girls.

In many provincial clubs it would be impossible to appoint a club chaplain without giving offence to some of the other clergy of the town, so various clergy are asked in succession to take classes in the club. Most clubs of this sort content themselves with having a Bible-class for those who "go nowhere," and recommend the girls whose homes are in other parishes to go to their respective churches and chapels for their Sunday classes.

A difficulty in planting down an independent club, financed and managed by some wealthy person, is that it at once comes into conflict with the organisations of the parish in which it is placed. It seems rather a waste of money and labour that so many clubs should be started, not only in the same locality, but even in the very same street. In a very poor part of

London there are no less than four Girls' Clubs in the same street ! This matters less in our huge metropolis, where the girls come to these clubs from every part of the town and from the suburbs ; but even here, the close proximity of so many institutions for girls occasionally gives rise to ill-feeling, which is matter for regret when there are so many other places where a club is badly wanted and where it might do untold good.

It was our good fortune, last Lent, to receive an invitation to see the work which is being done for factory girls in a very poor part of East London. The spacious crypt below the parish church is used for the club. The centre part forms a fine hall, and various smaller rooms and corridors are partitioned off at the sides. This hall makes a very paradise of a playroom ; swings hang from the ceiling, and one of the attractions is a great rocking-boat which is placed in the middle of the hall. There is a smaller sitting-room where the girls can rest quietly if so disposed, a piano to which they can sing and dance, and a kitchen with a gas-stove.

This delightful retreat is open to factory girls every day, except Saturday, from twelve till two o'clock p.m. They can bring their dinners with them and cook them ; or, if they prefer, they can buy ready-cooked food. Crockery is provided, and the girls pay a penny a week. The girls who sit at each particular table have their own private cupboard for china, glasses,

etc., and prizes for the neat putting-away of these things are given once a quarter. Our attention was called to sundry gorgeous teapots won by some of the girls for the neatness of their cupboards.

Immediately dinner is finished (a rapid process), the younger girls rush to the swings and the rocking-boat, doubtless as an aid to digestion. The large number of girls (about 250 or more) who avail themselves of this mid-day club show how much it is appreciated and how great is the need for it. The girls, employed at the great factories round, live, for the most part, many miles from their work, so after an insufficient meal at a cheerless coffee-shop, they formerly spent their leisure in lounging about the streets, not infrequently getting into serious mischief.

One of the workers told us that this club had been open for four years, and for a long time the girls were utterly lawless and untamed in their behaviour; but as time went on they quieted down wonderfully, and now there were hardly ever any complaints of bad behaviour. "Of course we could not at first attempt to speak to them of religion," she said; "they would only have made game of it, and been rude to the speaker; but now they are so different, and they are fond of us, so we feel we can make a beginning. The vicar's idea was to have various speakers, greatly interested in girls, to talk to the elder ones for half an hour

every Friday in Lent. (Of course the girls' attendance is purely voluntary.) *Yours* is the first talk," she added. This news was a little alarming; however, we repaired to the gymnasium and awaited the first batch, laundry girls of the roughest type, who bore with us most patiently on the subject of "Why should I be religious?" We detected, by their ignorance of even the most popular hymn tunes, how very few, if any, were church or chapel-goers. These were succeeded by the tailoresses and tea-girls, a distinct grade higher, and the third batch were the tobacco-factory girls. The remark of one of these on departing was characteristic: "Pity we 'as to go to work now we was jest beginnin' to chew it."

Needless to say it cheered us greatly to feel that any bit of our instruction was being inwardly "chewed." The behaviour of the girls was excellent, and each girl shook hands with us on returning to the factory.

This is not the only work which is carried on for their benefit, for once a week, at the time the factories close, there is a temperance meeting which is most popular.

Every Friday in the year in the dinner-hour there is a Bible-class for the younger girls, which is also very well attended, and it was pleasant to see how large a number left the tempting swings and scampered upstairs to be instructed.

Altogether it was most encouraging, and we felt what a good thing it would be if more clubs

of this particular kind could be started wherever there are large factories where the workers live at a distance from their work.

In whatever kind of club we make up our mind to work we are bound to find different but equally perplexing and annoying difficulties, but to a brave soul an obstacle race is not without its attractions.

In all methods of work, however apparently diverse, there must be, if the work is to do any lasting good, the motive of winning the girls to the highest of all ends, that of knowing, loving, and serving God.

CHAPTER IV

THE CLUB-LEADER, HER IDEALS AND TRAINING

"That which you are you will teach, not voluntarily, but involuntarily."

WE used to talk about the "superintendent," or the "head," or the "secretary" of a club, now the name of "leader" has superseded the other names, and surely there is significance in the change. "Superintendent" has an official ring about it, "head" sounds autocratic (we shall have, however, often to use this name on account of its brevity in this book), and "secretary" expresses but a small part of the many duties which fall to the lot of the much-tried "club-lady," as the girls call her.

A "leader," not one who merely directs, far less commands, but one who goes in advance; and surely this is what we have to do. It is quite curious to note how large a number of girls will follow, in many cases almost unconsciously, the lead of the head of the club. If she makes religion her first aim and object in the club, the girls will accept its paramount

importance without question. If in her heart of hearts the social side has the pre-eminence, so will it be with the girls. We at once see the need of ourselves striving to be what we want the girls to be. They are quick to detect the least insincerity, or the change from a sort of guardian-angel, sentimental manner of sweetness and light, when addressing ourselves to them, to the blunt, sometimes slangy manner, in which we address those in our own class of life. It is unnecessary at any time to be either sentimental or slangy; let us try to be quite our natural selves, avoiding any touch of affectation or of condescension. The least want of respect in speaking of our clergy is quickly caught up by the girls and used as an excuse for doing the same. "I heard Miss — say it, so it can't be wrong." The careless word of criticism of the sermon on coming out of church with our girls may do harm which never even crossed our mind when we lightly and jokingly made the remark. When we realise how constantly our girls look up to us for example of conduct, of conversation, and of manners, we feel how serious is the responsibility of a club-leader.

We once heard of a factory girl who, in the course of a confidential talk with her club-lady, said, "You wouldn't never believe, miss, what a lot of self-control the girls use to keep themselves in hand when they are with you ladies." If our girls, with their undisciplined natures, can and do hold themselves so completely in check,

surely we, too, can be careful not to wound their susceptibilities of what a lady should do or say. Some one who was asked to help to entertain some very rough girls thought to amuse them by singing rather vulgar music-hall songs. She was surprised to find that they were quite shocked to think that a *lady* should sing such songs. The girls look up to us ; our character is insensibly moulding theirs for good or for evil. The girls do not want us to come down to their level, but rather that we should raise them up to our level.

Our motives should be carefully considered before taking up this work. We often hear a person say, "I was very dull and lonely, and had nothing better to do." Such a motive sometimes leads to a higher one, but it inclines the worker to look upon the club as a pastime for herself rather than for the girls, and often when she comes to any difficulties she will throw up the work in disgust. Then there is the worker who takes up Girls' Clubs because "they are so fashionable just now." "The dear Bishop of — is so keen upon them ;" "Lady this and Lady that go down twice a week to their clubs in some slum in East or South London." This fashion in club work is a real danger at the present time when clubs and Happy Evenings have taken the place of the slumming which was, for a short period, so much in favour. Sometimes workers who take up work from these frivolous motives develop real enthusiasm

and earnestness, but with many it is a mere fleeting fancy, chiefly because they do not realise that any worthy work must involve self-sacrifice. If we give up our club evenings for every tempting engagement, if we do not learn something which we can teach to our girls, our work will be of little value. "What can you do?" asks the grateful club-leader to some three or four nicely dressed girls who, closely attended by their respective maids, have arrived at the club for the first time, and are sitting together as far removed as possible from their working sisters, and feeling uncomfortably shy, and that they are *de trop* in every sense. "Can you play dance music?" "We can't play at all." "Can you take a class in anything?" "We should be *much* too shy." "Can you play games?" "We don't know anything but bridge." The disappointed club-leader suggests "Snap," and "Happy Families" as more appropriate card-games; and, as a last suggestion, says, "Will you not go and talk to some of the girls?" They answer, "We should not know what to say." These would-be helpers sometimes do not appear again, as they say that there was nothing for them to do, and that they were not wanted.

It does not matter *what* it is, but we should be able to do one thing well so that we can teach it to the girls. Any passable player on the piano is always an acquisition. If we can only play a little, we must practise, and surely our work

is worth some trouble. Then, what a great help it is if one of the club-workers can drill the girls. Good teachers of needlework are always a help ; basket-work and chip-carving can be learnt in order to teach the girls. We have spoken of the helpers first, because it is generally some one who begins as a helper who is chosen as a club-leader. If only we had availed ourselves of the opportunities of learning various things which came in our way through life, what much more useful people we should be, especially as club-leaders ; for any one who can teach a subject well, no matter what it is, is of real use in a club.

Our aims and objects should be the good, in the most comprehensive sense, of those under our care. Our duties will be many-sided, for the club should touch the girl's life at every point. Her health, not only of soul, but body, home, work, manners, courtship, holidays—in all these the club must influence and help her. The field of Girls' Club work has extended its area enormously from its small beginning of a weekly evening's recreation. It is cheering to note that in far the greater number, even of so-called secular clubs, the chief good to which the workers are trying to lead the girls is the recognition of the claims of GOD upon their lives.

We should go to our club with a prayer for right guidance upon our lips, that the work may be " begun, continued, and ended in GOD." We constantly feel so weak, so utterly unfitted

to guide, to sympathise, even to be bright and amusing, that our only hope is in the grace and power which prayer brings to us.

We go out to our club resolved to be so patient and so forbearing, and then the *bête noire* of the club (there is nearly always one, sometimes several) was so tiresome and so provoking that we then and there summarily suspended her from the club, or, more unwisely still, expelled her. Most likely a little patience and a few quiet words of reproof would have extracted an apology from the offender. We go home irritated with ourselves for having lost our temper, and feeling that we are no good for this kind of work.

"Surely I made my prayer, and I did deem,
That I could keep me in Thy morning beam,
Immaculate and bright.
But my foot slipped ; and as I lay he came,
My gloomy foe, and robbed me of Heaven's flame.
Help Thou my darkness, LORD, till I am light." *

These mistakes and acts of impatience to which we sometimes give way are good for us, in keeping us humble, and in preventing us from developing into that most unpleasant creature, "the superior person." How often we feel how much better we should like certain acquaintances if only they would own themselves occasionally in the wrong. Our girls never think the less of us for owning humbly

* From Newman's *Verses on Various Occasions*.

that we have been in the wrong in some matter. A club-leader once hastily expelled a girl for some discourtesy, a punishment out of all proportion to the offence. When she realised how over-severe and really unjust she had been, she asked the girl to come and see her and told her that she felt she owed her an apology for her hasty action. The girl met the apology in a very generous spirit, saying, "I am sure it was all my own fault, and I well deserved it." The impatience of yesterday will help us to guard against the same fault to-morrow. The fall of to-day will prevent us from judging our girls' faults and sins too hardly when we realise how very faulty we ourselves are in spite of all our advantages.

In club-work, as in all other more directly spiritual work, everything depends upon the motive which lies behind it. It is so easy to be working, almost unconsciously, for a wrong motive. For instance, there is the desire expressed by a great writer, "They do not wish to be lovely, but to be loved"; in other words, they wish to put the cart before the horse, the cause before the effect. Any one who strives with prayer and patience to build up her character in humble imitation of the CHRIST-ideal of loveliness will be loved without needing to seek for love. This over-anxiety to be loved, and to be thought a great deal of by those whom we are trying to help, will sadly mar and spoil the work. It will lead to jealousy of other workers who



seem to win this coveted affection so much more easily. It is one of those rewards which, if eagerly pursued, will fly from the pursuer. Sometimes this spirit leads workers to resort to unworthy means by trying to buy the affection of the girls with gifts and treats, by allowing them to speak against other workers, and by fearing to rebuke lest they should become unpopular.

Any worker who finds this desire for popularity acquiring undue prominence in her mind should remember that we want to do lasting good to these girls in a far wider sense than by merely forming a strong personal bond between ourselves and them. We want to try to do all we can to help our girls, both in body and soul, with no thought of reward in the gaining of their affection. Dr. Pusey wrote a short and beautiful prayer which might well be used by all workers. It runs as follows: "LORD JESUS, Whom after three years' labour all forsook and fled, help me to labour for Thee, looking for no reward save from Thee."

Those who have worked in various Girls' Clubs for many years will tell us how unstable and evanescent the affections of girls generally are. Our girls will appear heart-broken if we have, for any reason, to give up the care of their club. "No one will ever be like Miss A," they say; but in a fortnight's time at latest they will be just as gushing about Miss B, whom they have never perhaps seen before. This is an

everyday experience, yet how common it is to meet workers who are quite overwhelmed by the apparent affection of their girls. They are so delighted at the flowers and the little gifts that are presented to them, that at last they begin to feel that they are possessed of exceptional powers of influence, and of drawing out affections. As a matter of fact it rarely indicates any deep feeling at all. It is all very pleasant and gratifying, and shows a kindly feeling towards us, but do not let us take it for more than it is worth, or later on there will be sad disappointments in store for us. It is necessary, we find, to limit these gifts to Christmas and Easter, otherwise the girls are inclined to spend money on us which they are really quite unable to afford; and for other reasons we should not allow it to be done. (Of course, in the case of flowers that are picked from their own gardens, it is quite a different thing.)

We must not let these expressions of affection lead us to take a false estimate of the value of our own work.

“Should e’er Thy wonder-working grace
Triumph by our weak arm,
Let not our sinful fancy trace
Aught human in the charm.”

Now and then it has been said by those who give addresses to girls: “You know I have a most extraordinary magnetic influence with girls; whenever I have to speak to them, it is

always the same, they crowd to hear me." Such speeches sound better from other lips than our own, and the only influence that we need desire to have is that given in answer to prayer to the HOLY SPIRIT for right guidance before we speak. If we are asked to speak to girls, let us first pray for help; then having done our best, we need not worry as to whether we spoke well or badly. We shall be in no danger of vanity if we feel our own utter weakness and incompetence, and that the only hope of our poor words doing any good is through absolute reliance on Divine Grace. It will encourage us to hear sometimes how, if we have prepared ourselves by prayer, our words have helped this girl or that. The only thought then that will come into our minds will be, "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy Name be the praise."

All this applies just as much to the opposite kind of temperament which is inclined to shrink distrustfully from putting forth its own powers. If self-confident characters need restraining and controlling, these other characters need purpose and determination. Self-confidence often comes from inexperience and untested powers. Such characters will soon find out the depths of their own ignorance, and how lacking they are in the many qualities needed for the work, and so they will soon find their own level. It is often pride which prompts the refusal made on the plea of distrust of self to take up some work. If GOD calls us to do work for Him, He

Himself will teach us to how to do it. Shrinking from it means fear of failure, unwillingness to learn from others, and, worst of all, distrust of God's grace.

As we see more and more of the developments in Girls' Club work which are going on in our great cities, we are inclined to say in despair that it is beyond us altogether, that we are not clever enough for it. It is not cleverness that we need but observation ; we must keep our eyes and ears open, and gain as much information as we can about all subjects that touch upon girl-life. We should never lose opportunities of going over any factory where girl-labour is employed, and of finding out all we can about different trades, wages, and conditions of work. We should visit clubs, more especially those which differ most from our own in their methods of work, and learn all we can from the experiences of other workers. We have never yet visited any club without learning something, either to adopt or to avoid, from its arrangements.

There is no better way in which to learn something at first hand of the lives of working-girls than by spending a few weeks at some Holiday Home. The girls will tell us all about their work, homes, young men, etc., in a way which neither we nor they have, as a rule, leisure or opportunity to hear or to relate.

Knowledge of the real working-girl will prevent our trying to manufacture that most

objectionable being, the prig. We shall find, if the girls are natural with us, that they think, act, and speak in an entirely different way from ourselves. As long as there is nothing vulgar or coarse in their behaviour it is far better to let them be themselves than to try to graft on them the manners and behaviour of a different class, which at best will be only a faint veneer.

We must try and cultivate, if we have it not, a memory for faces, for not to recognise a club-girl in the street is a grievous offence. Kind thoughts for individual girls are much appreciated, such as a post-card to greet them on their birthdays, and a visit or a letter in sickness or sorrow. These things give great pleasure, and they only involve a little kind thinking about others. The more we ourselves have gained from our past experiences of life, whether of joy or of sorrow, and the more we have thought and pondered over the lessons GOD meant us to learn from them, so much the more deep and real will be our power of sympathy with our girls as they come to one after another of the milestones on life's high-road. Even our own temptations and sins will assist us to help others. We must pray that we may have

"A heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathise."

Briefly, we want in all our club-work to aim high, and to have a pure intention to do all for

God's glory. When we find that our motives are becoming mixed, we must try to disentangle the gold from the dross ; and if we meet with great disappointments or great encouragements in our work, and the latter are often the most dangerous, we should remember John Keble's beautiful lines for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity :

“ To our own nets ne'er bow we down,
Lest on the eternal shore
The angels, while our draught they own,
Reject us evermore.

Or, if for our unworthiness,
Toil, prayer and watching fail,
In disappointment Thou canst bless,
So love at heart prevail.”

CHAPTER V

DIFFICULTIES IN OUR RELATIONS WITH OUR WORKERS

"A little management may evade resistance which a vast force might vainly try to overcome."

WE often hear it said by perplexed club-leaders, "I can manage the *girls* well enough, but my *workers* are so difficult."

Our workers will, very often, be our greatest difficulty, because when people kindly offer to help us, we cannot, unfortunately, say, "Thank you very much; will you come and try for a month first how you get on with the *girls*?" Frequently, too, we are so much in want of help that, in desperation, we welcome the first person who offers to help us. It is far better to have no workers than to have persons who are unsuitable. The harm that unwise and tactless workers do in a club is sometimes irreparable; they lower the whole tone of the club. We have found from experience that the safest and best way of getting good workers is to ask some girl in your own class of life to help you

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who has had no previous experience, and gradually to train her in the work of the club. This method of obtaining workers answers admirably. They persevere in their work, and, in a few years, they are able to take complete control of the club when required to do so.

It is sometimes rather a difficult position for a club-leader when she has workers who are older than herself. In such cases there are possible rocks and breakers ahead, and it behoves us to be very careful if we are to work in unity. Here, as in every other difficulty, the power of religion, personal affection, and the consideration of the ultimate good of the girls will alone tide us over such breakers. If we were saints, these frictions would not occur, but as we are only faulty human beings they are bound to take place now and then. It is better to have occasional differences of opinion than to be a "good-natured person"—that is to say, one who will just let things slide along without reproof or reform when these are needed, with a view to the saving of trouble and annoyance, and sometimes from inability to think or act independently.

We must remember that the more character and originality there are amongst the workers of a club, the more likelihood there is of differences of opinion arising.

The constitution of clubs differs very much. Some are managed by a committee of ladies, with a paid resident superintendent. In some

such cases, one or other of the ladies is responsible for one evening in the week, when she presides over the club quite independently of the superintendent.

In other clubs the leader, whether honorary or not, has the entire control of the club in her own hands. If we are in this latter position, we shall, if we are wise, hold the reins of leadership firmly. We should never give up our right to come in and out of the club whenever we wish to do so ; to be present at all the classes ; and to reprove any girl if we see fit to do so. If we are not firm on these points, and hold the reins of government loosely, they will soon slip out of our hands altogether, and then division and rebellion will creep into the club. If a girl is rude or disobedient, she should be reported to the club-leader, who alone should have the power of suspending girls from membership of the club.

We shall rarely have any difficulties with our younger workers whom we ourselves have trained, but with those older than ourselves. It requires great humility, we should remember, for such workers to submit to the ruling of a younger person in matters of club discipline, etc., and it requires much tact and consideration from the club-leader—qualities which those of us who are in this position do not always display. If possible, let us talk over any matter of dispute quietly with our aggrieved worker, and try to appreciate her point of view,

and let us do this a day or two after the little upset has occurred. If she takes up the position that, being older than we are, she has a right to control the affairs of the club, and that being more experienced she must be right about the particular difference of opinion, then there is nothing for it but to hold our ground firmly. If the workers are not of one mind, nothing but disaster can happen to the club. Probably the club-leader has been wanting in consideration for the older worker, and the latter is feeling a little sore about being, in a certain sense—for it is impossible to have two club-leaders—in a subordinate position.

Sometimes, when all is apparently going on well and smoothly, beneath the surface there is an under-current of disloyalty amongst the workers—to one another, and to the club-leader. In order to guard against this danger we cannot be too cautious in our choice of workers. We should not put a person wanting in education or refinement in any place of responsibility; if we do, we shall, as time goes on, bitterly regret it.

A meeting of workers held quarterly, or monthly, is often a help to the club. We might open it with a prayer for unity, and for the special gifts needed in our work. From time to time we should emphasise the immense importance of loyalty to one another, above all in our intercourse with the girls. We could also talk over our difficulties, or our grievances, if

we have any, in a friendly way. How hard it is to approach, even distantly, the ideal club-leader of our dreams! Sometimes we are headstrong in insisting on our own way in some small matter which is really of no consequence at all, but which annoys the other workers. Sometimes we are so busy, and so taken up with the girls, that we quite forget that our workers expect a pleasant word now and then. Sometimes club-leaders speak to their workers in the hurry of the moment in a way which is not intended to be rude or unkind, but which is the result of the pressure and hurry of the moment.

Those who are helping in a club might remember that the short evenings, crowded as they are with work and play, do not give much spare time for the courteous speeches of more leisured moments.

Club-leaders are, no doubt, often inconsiderate, but workers are often most unreasonably touchy, or "sensitive," as they prefer to call it. Sometimes, when the last rehearsal of a play is taking place, a worker will come in late, and because the harassed club-leader does not stop short in the middle of the practice to greet her, she will be offended and huffy for weeks afterwards. The unfortunate club-leader cannot make out what she can possibly have done to offend Miss so-and-so. Surely such conduct is childish! If we really made the girls our first consideration, we should not be on the look-out

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for little slights which are entirely unintentional. If any helper appear to be offended, it is best to ask at once if there is anything wrong, and to say how sorry we are to have hurt her by any unintentional slight.

If one of our helpers behave in a way calculated to set a bad example to the girls, we should on no account pass it over or put off dealing with it at once. It is horribly unpleasant to have to speak, but our duty is clear. We must, however, try to speak in a pleasant way. There are two ways of giving a rebuke; in the first we arouse the worst side of the person whom we have to reprove, in the second we arouse all that is good in her. Sometimes, curiously enough, a just, carefully worded rebuke makes a strong bond between us and the offender. We must never speak to others as if we were superior persons. It is best to say, "we," not "you"; and we can soften our rebuke with the remark that we often fell into exactly the same mistakes through want of experience when we began working.

It is not always a compliment to be described as "such a nice kind person, she gets on with everybody." Very often, beneath the mild sway of such a club-leader, want of discipline and wrong-doing are growing apace, and the club, even if outwardly successful, is influencing no one for good.

It may fall to our lot to be forced conscientiously to act in opposition to the opinions of

others. We knew of such a case when circumstances required that a girl should be immediately expelled from the club, and that the reason for this step should be made public in order to separate her from her former companions as completely as possible. The club-leader, who knew well what she was doing, had no shadow of doubt as to the justice of her action. Here, most people would say, was no difficulty ; of course all would uphold her action. The expelled girl went from one to another of the workers, including also the Sisters and clergy, telling the most extraordinary lies, a symptom of the hysteria from which she was suffering. One of the club-workers, acting in direct opposition to the club-leader, sympathised with her ; other unwise workers took her up ; and the scandal and harm done in this club by one mentally diseased girl would hardly be believed. Subsequent events proved how rightly this sorely tried club-leader had acted, as the mistaken persons who befriended this girl found to their cost. Any club-leader who is unfortunate enough to find herself in a similar position should stand firm for righteousness and justice, even if her action is condemned by the very persons who ought to support it. We owe it to those under our care to remove the plague-spot, which one bad girl is, from the club. It is our duty to do it, regardless of any slanders which such a girl may set about concerning us, and regardless of the opinions of other people.

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Such an occurrence will at once be made use of by any enemies the club-leader may have in the parish.

In a somewhat similar case the head of another club belonging to the same parish used it as an opportunity for sowing dissension between the girls and their club-leader, and even advised the former to keep friends with the girl who was expelled. It seems hard to believe it possible that professedly religious people could act in such a way. We can only put it down to the direct work of the devil, who tries to hinder and mar all religious work. We may console ourselves with the thought that any persons endowed with a little worldly knowledge, a little common-sense, and a little experience of what hysterical girls may do and say, will support our action, and the opinion of any others is not worthy of consideration.

Several club-leaders have found themselves in unpleasant difficulties over a member's wedding. The event is to be made the occasion of a club festival, and a wedding-present is to be given. Sad to say, circumstances arise which make it impossible to countenance that wedding. We must, for the sake of the good name of the club, show our disapproval by cancelling all the promised festivities. We know how much unpleasantness may arise from our action, and we may be tempted to shut our eyes, to know nothing, and thus to escape it ;

but our duty is plain : we can allow no wedding-present and no festivities to be given by the club. The result occasionally is that the relations of the bride-elect abuse us, personally and by post, and perhaps may even threaten us with an action for slander. Of course all this is mere bullying, but it is so unpleasant that we begin to wish that we had never taken up Girls' Club work. We may console ourselves with the knowledge that we have taught our girls a more telling lesson on purity than any we have ever given in class. Our workers are, of course, bound to support us in this matter.

We must never use expulsion as a punishment for ordinary misbehaviour, but only for cases of immorality, or continually keeping late hours, which will eventually end in wrongdoing. Girls who constantly tell lies and make mischief among their companions, girls who speak against the religious teaching of the club and try to prejudice their companions against it, should, if they persist in such conduct, be expelled. If we keep them, they will ruin the club.

With regard to girls who are suspended from the club for long periods as a severe punishment, we should keep in touch with them privately, by seeing them away from the club and by writing to them. We once suspended a girl from club-membership for a year, and at the end of the time she came back quite reformed.

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Our experience of those helpers who, although working hard all day as shop-assistants, dress-makers, and teachers, most kindly give many of their evenings to us, is most happy. Their unselfishness, regularity, kindly influence with the girls, and desire to do all that the club-leader wishes, are beyond all praise. Where our young helpers generally fail is in the matter of authority ; the girls will not obey them, and it is therefore impossible to leave them in sole charge.

We ought to remember that most of us have "corners" which annoy those who work with us, so we should endeavour to bear and to forbear with one another. The most ordinary cause of disunion between workers is the presence of that ubiquitous fiend, "jealousy," in some form or other. As a safeguard we cannot ask ourselves too often, "What is my motive in having this club?" Is it the good of the girls, or is it my own self-glorification? If it is the former, jealousy will disappear. Let us take a common instance. A girl named A. takes a great affection for a helper named B., whom she much prefers to the club-leader. Miss B. has a very good influence over A. Now, if the club-leader feels an involuntary twinge from the fiend in question, she should pray it down, and warmly encourage the affection which exists between the girl and her worker.

Girls are very fickle, and sometimes an attractive new worker will carry all before her in

winning the lightly gained and easily lost affections of most of the girls. This may be a trial, but if we can successfully tread down the temptation, we shall have won a victory worth the winning and also the lasting respect of the girls.

When we read this chapter to a friend of ours, he remarked : " Why, you ought to be a sort of archangel to have a Girls' Club ! " We are far removed from being even ordinarily angelic without the " arch ; " but with a high standard before us we shall fail less deplorably than if we were content with a low one.

We must not forget that our workers have souls as well as the girls, and that they, too, often need sympathy and encouragement in their work. We can lend them books which will help them, for we must do what we can to educate our younger workers. We can take them to meetings about work with girls if we have the chance, and also to see other clubs, by way of enlarging their outlook.

We all, of course, pray for our girls, but do we also pray for our workers that we may be all of one mind ? Are we sufficiently grateful to them for all the work that they do, and the pains that they so ungrudgingly take to help us, or do we accept it all as a matter of course ? As we leave our youth behind us we shall begin to feel the trying length of the club evenings, the bad weather, the inevitable worries, and the occasional bitter disappointments ; our workers

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will also feel the same, and want cheering up. When we are overdone and overtired we are tempted to ask ourselves, "After all, is it worth while?" We were feeling like this one evening when a girl who had been a member of our club for six years came in for a chat. In the course of it she asked us if we remembered meeting her as a stranger in one of the streets of the parish and inviting her to the club. We answered, "We remember it well." She then went on to say (we quote her exact words), "If I had not joined it then, when I was just fourteen, I should have been on the streets by now." Isn't it worth any amount of tiredness and worry if we can help to keep just one girl straight, and how thankful we ought to feel for having been given the opportunity of helping one such girl!

The happiness of trying, in however small and poor a way, to make life brighter and happier for any of God's children is in itself a reward.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGIOUS TEACHING

"Sow with a generous hand,
Pause not for toil or pain,
But wait till the autumn comes
For the sheaves of golden grain."

DISCONSOLATE teachers are sometimes heard to exclaim hopelessly, "How ever am I to get the power of religion to touch girls who appear to be absolutely indifferent? the religious element seems almost non-existent among them." We should, as the beginning and the end of all real work, pray for each of our girls, yet how hard it is to do this! When the time and the day upon which we have fixed for our intercessions come round, instantly a hundred pressing matters present themselves that *must* be attended to that very moment. Frequently also a strong feeling of fatigue and disinclination for prayer seizes us, and we are sorely tempted to put off our duty for that more convenient moment which never comes. When we are present at the Holy Eucharist, we should offer

up our intercessions in union with the offering of the great Intercessor Himself.

The hymn and the prayer which seem almost universal at the conclusion of club evenings are a witness to the religious character of the work. In some cases this simple practice has been known to stir up a girl to recommence the neglected habit of prayer, and it aids us also in the recollection of the Presence of GOD.

There should be one or two religious classes in connection with the club, but we often hear that the girls will not come to these, and even if they do come they seem bored and uninterested. Why do we fail to interest our girls? Is it possible that we are not human enough? Are we our natural selves? Do we allow our own individuality to come out? A stiff, cold manner when teaching is fatal. We sometimes listen to the sermons of one of the most popular preachers in London at a certain famous church, near a busy thoroughfare, and as we see the rapt faces of his hearers, young and old, we ask ourselves what is the wonderful attraction? His words are very simple, there is nothing in them that even the most unlettered person might not understand; what then is the secret? Surely, first, the preacher's intense devotion to our Blessed LORD which shines out in every word he utters. We heard a girl of sixteen say, after having heard one of these sermons for the first time, "Lots of people speak about religion as if it were some foreign country where they

had never been, and only knew by hearsay and reading up, but Father S—— speaks of religion so that it becomes a real living fact to one." Can it be possible, if our girls are bored by our classes, that religion is to us a foreign country, only known to us from second-hand knowledge ?

Then the second point in these sermons is that the simple, ordinary, everyday experiences of life are spoken of, and touched, and illuminated by the power of religion ; and the use of humour in driving home a point, or in showing up some of our human weaknesses, is not neglected, perhaps even to the displeasing of some strictly conventional hearer.

We must, however, remember that all have not this power of appealing to the humorous side of their listeners, and the instant afterwards winning from them the most serious attention. So if we can do so naturally, let us profit by this example, and not be afraid of raising an occasional smile—the girls will remember our words all the better for a touch of humour—and do let us appeal to things which lie within the limits of their experience. Such incidents in their lives as a sudden death, an accident, a great joy, a bereavement, a providential escape, sometimes make impressions which never fade away. As an example of this we heard that the members of a very rough mid-day Girls' Club had asked to have a weekly Bible-class in their dinner-hour, and the reason

they gave us was that the sudden death in the night of one of their mates, who had been at work with them the same day in the best of health and spirits, had brought home to them, as no words had ever before brought it home, the shortness of life and the need of preparation for the life beyond the grave.

The more we visit the homes and the places where our girls work the more we shall understand of the nature of their environment and of their temptations, and the more deeply we enter into their needs, both bodily and spiritual, the more we shall be in a position to help them by our words. The experiences of guarded, sheltered lives, such as many of ours have been, are very different from those of most of our girls, so we must know what their lives really are before we can hope to be of real use to them. Nothing so strongly conveys the reality of the truths we are trying to teach as illustrations drawn from our own and others' spiritual experiences, temptations, and trials. They were given to us, not only for our own encouragement, but also that we might help others by them. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

We ought, of course, to read and to study for our classes, but there are two most necessary books which teachers often neglect, and these are the books of nature and of human character. In the first, if we have the eyes to see them, what wonderful lessons there are! It is impossible

to spend an afternoon in gardening, for instance, without seeing many wonderful illustrations of the garden of the human heart. That charming child's book, Mrs. Gatty's *Parables from Nature*, might be read to girls when out in the country. Our girls have never forgotten her axiom, "Purr when you are pleased," given in a lesson on saying "Thank you," and on looking pleased when kind things are done for us.

Lessons in stone are numerous too; what a telling lesson our great cathedral at Lincoln preaches to the toiling, moiling crowd of workers living at the foot of the hill amid the smoke and dirt of the foundry chimneys! There stands this wonderful house of GOD, a type of the heavenly Jerusalem, towering far above them on a height, in all its beauty and dignity—a joy and a refreshment to any who look up at it; but so few do; their eyes are on the ground, or they are occupied with other things, or they are so accustomed to the sight that they have long ceased to see the beauty of it. Yet seen through mist, or storm, or rain, or sunshine, it is always different, but always a sight of radiant beauty gladdening the heart, just as the eyes of the soul open upon the vision of Heaven, beautiful always, though seen through the storms of temptation, or the rain of sorrow, or the sunshine of joy.

Another striking lesson that can be learnt at Lincoln is from the two statues placed on the turrets of the west front. That to the south is

S. Hugh, the great bishop and founder of the cathedral; that to the north is the bishop's swineherd, who saved a peck of silver pennies during his life for the building of the cathedral. Swineherd and bishop are together immortalised, because the servant used well his one talent and the master his ten talents. Both are therefore equally blest in the sight of GOD, and equally honoured in the sight of man.

A priest of some eminence took down to dinner a lady who began to talk about the state of the poor, and went on to say she had just become a district visitor. "Do you like the work?" asked the priest. "Not at all," replied the lady, "it is most unpleasant; the people I visit think themselves quite as good as I am." There was a pause; the priest broke it by the unexpected question, "And aren't they, dear lady?" The lesson of the bishop and the swineherd appeared to be much needed here. It is far more interesting to our hearers if we find our own illustrations first hand for ourselves rather than gather them from some little book of anecdotes.

Then there is the book of human character, which many a teacher has never read at all, and in which few indeed are deeply read. Because to so many it is a closed book, it is often forgotten that no one person exactly resembles another in the whole of GOD's wide world, therefore it follows that a slightly different method of dealing with each girl is required. One wants bracing

treatment, one gentleness and encouragement, one severity, another repression.

A week-night Bible-class taken by the club-leader herself often attracts girls who would not come on a Sunday. It is well to have an hour's needlework or some other quiet employment before the class begins. We have first to arouse in these girls some desire for religion, and some idea of its value, before we can begin to give them definite instruction, so a sort of very simple mission class is needed for them. A good subject with which to begin is, "Why do you want me to be religious?" Then we might talk about "Prayer," "Influence," "Keeping Straight," and later on it will be possible to begin dogmatic teaching on the Creed. The girls love singing mission hymns; singing will always prove an attraction to them. With junior girls it is best to go upon an entirely different system; they are at a teachable age, and we can easily persuade them to learn some simple catechism by heart. We can also get them to write papers, give them marks for answering, and let them sing hymns which teach both faith and practice.

In the senior class it is a good rule to have intercessions once a month. These special petitions for their own needs teach them more about the power of prayer than many exhortations. Use pictures wherever it is possible. Excellent postcards with views of Palestine, and illustrative of local customs referred to in

the Bible, can now be procured. Formerly the views of the grotto of the Nativity and of the Holy Sepulchre were not to be obtained except as illustrations to expensive books ; let us make good use of all this cheap art which is now at our command. Religion comes home to some in one way, to others in another, so we must try to use every help which is open to us.

We might take our girls sometimes into their church and make it the basis of an object lesson, explaining what its different parts symbolise, and also the meaning of the stained-glass windows, pictures, ornaments, sculpture, etc. So many people are like the "No eyes" described in *Evenings at Home*. They will sit opposite a window, a picture, or a reredos, and see nothing at all until it is explained to them. It is often said of a beautiful church, "Why, there is a lesson to be learnt here wherever your eyes rest, in wood or in stone or in painted window!" True, the lessons are there, but the eyes have to be taught to see them. Surely one of the joys of the resurrection body will be the extended power of sight for all that is beautiful! Some girls will thank us afterwards for taking the trouble to teach them to notice what is before their eyes.

In thinking of *our* difficulties in bringing the girls under the power of religion, we must not forget *their* difficulties. As long as they are school-girls they are encouraged and generally compelled to go to a Sunday School of some

kind. What that institution teaches is a matter of indifference to a large number of the parents. They want to get rid of the children for the greater part of Sunday, and yet to know that they are out of harm's way. This double end is successfully achieved by the Sunday School. They have also the firm conviction that they have performed their whole duty as to the religious training of their child by sending her somewhere on Sunday almost as soon as she is able to walk.

When the girl leaves school for work the parents' attitude entirely changes, and is expressed thus: "She goes where she likes; she don't take no notice of what I says." The moment the girl becomes a wage-earner the parents seem afraid to exercise any authority over her, for fear lest, if old enough, she should leave home for lodgings. A quaint instance of the utter indifference of parents as to what their children are taught was shown by the answer of a mother to her district visitor's inquiry as to where her small children went on Sundays. "Sure I can't tell you, ma'am; all I knows is I puts 'em outside the door Sunday mornings and says, 'Go to Sunday School,' and they goes somewheres; but *where*, I couldn't tell you."

The utter want of discipline in their home-life makes it very hard to get girls to submit to the simplest rules at the club. For example, a woman, when urged by her vicar's wife to send her children, aged five and seven, to Sunday

School, replied : " Well, mum, I'll do what I can for you ; I'll do my very best to *persuade* them to come ;" or, as a woman told us the other day, " I gives the children the privilege to *choose* where they goes of a Sunday."

Then there is the children's point of view to consider. It is rare to find a child who does not go to a Sunday School of some kind. They like going with their little friends, and they find it much more amusing than staying at home, and the hope of coming treats is also an inducement to attendance. In the poorer parts of our big towns children are encouraged to go to three or four different Bands of Hope, Happy Evenings, Children's Clubs, and lantern services for several reasons—they are out of their mothers' way for an hour or two, and safer than if they were playing in the streets ; also, bi-annual treats are sure to be obtained, possibly clothing, and probably country holidays. Some children manage to go to some entertainment or other every evening of the week during the winter. We have known children go to various classes held by Church people and by Dissenters of different kinds. A curiously assorted tangle of religious knowledge is thus acquired, which of course leaves no definite impression on their minds. When the girls leave school, they throw over the no longer obligatory Sunday School for the joys of " walking out " with boys, and having their " fling," as they call it. Little wonder is it when girls brought up in this manner

—and they may be counted by thousands—have, when they become members of our clubs, no idea of religious duty.

They nearly all tell us: "Of course I used to go to Sunday School when I was a kid; I liked it then, and the day in the country and all; but now I goes to work, I want to be out of a Sunday and have my freedom." When we talk about "duty" in connection with religion they simply do not understand us. A church-going home in many parts of London is so rare that those few dwellers in the courts and buildings who do go to church on a Sunday morning are often insulted and mocked until they give up the practice. Courage of no mean order is needed in some localities to persevere in going to church. We should find our church-going by no means made easier if our neighbours characterised us as "cringing hypocrites," or if such remarks as, "You're a nice one to go to church, you are," were continually thrown in our face when we did anything in the least degree wrong.

The parents are often the great obstacle in the way of girls coming to church and being confirmed. If they are bad people, they are afraid of the vicar and the Church people hearing too much about them from their girl; this fear lies at the root of some of the parents' hatred of their children making their confession before a priest. Sometimes they look upon their girl's care for her religious duties as a sort of tacit

reproof to themselves. "What does *she* want a-setting herself up to be better than her father and mother?"

The elder brothers, too, are not behindhand with scoffs and coarse jests against religion to throw at their sisters. Is it any wonder that, with so much against them, it is hard to persuade them "to take to religion"? When we run over in our minds some of the girls whom we have known in the past, and those whom we now know in the present, we take courage and thank GOD for the reality of their faith. One of our girl-friends has to keep firm to her religion in a home where her father and three or four big brothers are ever ready with a scoff and a sneer against her religion, and yet she is one of the most faithful in the performance of all her Church duties. Another girl, from a drunken, miserable home, came forward for Confirmation, and persuaded her mother to have her little brothers baptised and sent to Sunday School. All club-leaders will be able to call such instances to mind; but do we sufficiently realise how hard it must be for them to stand firm against opposition, jeers, and no sympathy of any kind? Then their places of work are certainly not calculated to help them to be religious: too often they are veritable furnaces of temptation.

If we consider the girls' difficulties we shall not be so much discouraged at our apparent failure to win them to religion. We must be

thankful for very little in the way of response—for attendance at a week-night Bible-class, at a mission service, at a Good Friday lantern service, for a promise to say a daily prayer fulfilled. An excellent plan in poor neighbourhoods, which has been tried with success by some club-leaders, is to invite the girls to come with them to the Three Hours Service, and then to bring them back to the club for a simple meal of bread and fish, spend the time between dinner and tea in quietly reading or singing, and after tea have a class, and end the day by going to some lantern service at the nearest church. Some twenty or thirty girls spend Good Friday thus at a club with which we are acquainted. They say that it would be impossible for them to pass the day religiously in their own homes, where drink and holiday-making are the order of the day. What a blessing such a Good Friday thus spent must win both for the girls and for those who make these arrangements for them!

A "Quiet Evening" for a club does much good if the girls are ready for it, and in some parishes a half day's retreat can be arranged, but the time must depend upon the amount of leisure that the girls have. We ourselves have only been able to arrange for the hours from 6 p.m. till 10 p.m., as the girls could not leave work earlier.

If we can get the right sort of priest to give the addresses in very simple language about



their special temptations and difficulties, a great impression may be made. Our first "Quiet Evening" was arranged thus: A silent tea at 6 p.m. (many have to come straight from work without having had a meal); then they went up to the church, where books of prayer were provided, or they could read simple religious books and stories in the adjoining room. At 8 p.m. the first address was given. Mission hymns were sung, and none of them found the time too long. The addresses were on Repentance, and, as a result, several girls were led to make fresh starts. Another time we had addresses on the "Stations of the Cross," and on a third occasion on preparation for Christmas Communion. In some clubs these evenings are held entirely in the club rooms.

Much good may come of individual talks with the girls, but it is important not to *overdo* these private interviews. We have known girls behave disgracefully in order to be "talked to" by the club-leader, who, if young and inexperienced, at once falls into the trap. In such cases it answers best to speak once, and if the bad behaviour continues, to completely ignore the offender; there is no punishment which so soon brings her to amend her ways. Another danger of these "talks" is, that it is not healthy for girls to be encouraged to talk too much about themselves, or of their spiritual life. The very few girls who are inclined to talk piously are generally priggish, and are by no means the

most deeply religious. With far the greater number it is hard, until we know them well, to get out one word concerning their religious difficulties. A serious drawback to constant interviews is that it sometimes leads us to over-persuade a girl to take some special step in religion which she would not have done of her own free will. A weak-minded girl may be talked into doing almost anything, and some will readily do anything to please us. Religious acts done from such motives are of little value, for when a girl has been persuaded to come to any of the sacraments from a wrong motive, she will not appreciate the grace received. In later life, when, perhaps at some mission, she is urged to return to the use of long-neglected means of grace, she will refuse, "because," she says, "they didn't do me any good before." When a girl is in any real trouble or difficulty, we cannot give her too much individual care and sympathy; and if we are careful to guard against their abuse, these individual talks will be a great help to our girls. It is unwise to continually take first one and then another of the girls aside for private talks during the club evenings. It excites jealousy, and prevents our giving general attention to all the girls.

When a new girl joins the club, if she is unconfirmed, it is a good time to give her some simple book or card of daily prayers, and to say a few words to her about their use. It is not easy to find a book which is simple enough—

in which every prayer, even the "LORD's Prayer," is printed in full. There is a story told of a girl who, quite in good faith, said her prayers thus from the book given her: "Our FATHER," "I believe," "Glory be," not knowing that etc. signified that these were only the first sentences. In any talk with our girls on the subjects of religion our only hope of doing good is to pray that the HOLY SPIRIT, in this conversation and in all things, "may direct and rule our hearts."

Girls are generally very shy until they know us well, consequently the conversation will have to take the form of interrogation. Inquiries about the girl's home and her relations will help to break the ice, and will suggest a few words about the holy home at Nazareth. The explanation of a picture sometimes makes a talk on these subjects easier. Once, at the sight of a picture of our LORD in Gethsemane, a girl burst into uncontrollable sobs. We tried to guard against allowing this quite real emotion to dissipate itself only in feeling, so we made the girl promise to say a little prayer on the Passion every day at noon. We shall find that girls nearly always set far too high a value upon their feelings. If they say, "I don't feel any love for religion," they will immediately begin to give up one by one all their religious practices. We cannot tell them too often that what we *feel* is of little moment, but what we *do* is all-important; and that our LORD told us,

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them." A story is related of a great general who had to rebuke one of his subordinates for some failure of duty. The latter immediately began to excuse himself for his fault. The general replied: "I do not want your excuses or your criticisms, I want your *obedience*." One of our girls stayed away from Communion for months on account of her lack of religious feeling. We had a long talk with her, and told her this story, which seemed to strike her as nothing else had done, and she returned to her Communion after a careful preparation. Girls are contradictory creatures, and therefore they are far more likely to do what is desired if we say to them, "You know quite well what you ought to do. I do not want you to make any promise about it; I must leave it to your own sense of right and of duty." "To serve CHRIST, not to feel CHRIST, is the mark of His true servant," said one of our bishops.

In the matter of helping girls to make their first self-examination the well-intentioned efforts of teachers and others sometimes lead to the making of untrue and unreal confessions. Frequently when a girl comes to make her first confession in the presence of a priest, she has already made it previously to some Sister or teacher. This tends to destroy the reality, and often the truth of her sacramental confession. It is best to give as little help as possible, only briefly pointing out the meaning

of any question if we are asked to explain it. The book which we find of most use to our girls is, *The Christian's Handy Book of Prayer*; and for their first self-examination the questions in a book called *The Narrow Way*, are much more sensible and practical than many others. It is most necessary, in teaching on this subject, to impress on our girls' minds that they should pray for the light of the HOLY SPIRIT before attempting to find out their sins, and that they should be absolutely true in their confessions. We must make them understand that it is an awful sin to make a false confession. It is far better they should never make their confession than that they should make a deliberately incomplete one.

Our experience of many years ago as to the marvellous change wrought in any girl who regularly, and in a right spirit, seeks the grace of absolution, is confirmed by all our later experiences. A young person often needs help so sorely, and this help is given in direct response to the known needs of her soul, and not in general exhortations which have, most likely, no bearing on her case. There are many diseases, physicians tell us, which could easily have been cured if only a doctor had been consulted in time. Is not this also true of the soul? How easily the beginnings of sin, the ungovernable temper, the self-indulgence which ended in drink, the want of purity which ended in the wrecked and blasted life, might have been

checked at the outset ; but now, like the ivy which climbs closer and closer round the tree-trunk, stifling the life of the tree, so unrepented sins must infallibly end in killing the spiritual life of the soul.

Consideration of this subject brings us naturally to the relation of the members of the club to their clergy. It does not seem to answer very well with a senior girls' club for one of the clergy to be constantly in and out arranging their amusements and playing games with them. The old proverb that "familiarity breeds contempt" has truth in it, for generally the girls soon begin to show a want of respect for their chaplain when speaking to him or of him. They are also not inclined to go to him for spiritual help when they need it if they see too much of him in their secular life. If the chaplain of their club comes in from time to time to see what they are doing, and to give them a word of encouragement, it is quite a different thing—such visits are looked forward to as a special honour ; but the continual joining in their games, in their eyes lessens his dignity. A joking, chaffing manner of speech with any girls over the age of ten is liable to be misunderstood ; and while the club chaplain regards his intercourse with them as "playing with the children," he would suffer a considerable shock if he realised how very far from childlike these young persons of ten, twelve, and fourteen are. Then, as they grow up, they naturally do not

see why they should not continue to chaff their chaplain, and to hang on his arm as they did when they were children. This, too, becomes a little awkward. Girls are sadly inclined, if the opportunity is given them, to be too free with their clergy. A friend of mine wanted to have as a motto for her club, "Forward be our watchword." The vicar hastily negatived the proposal. "Why, surely the girls are forward enough as it is," he exclaimed, "without giving them a motto to remember about it." The motto was changed to one that did *not* convey a double meaning.

It is a great help to the club-leader if the vicar takes the class sometimes, gives away the prizes, and is the honoured guest at all social functions. One of the greatest advantages of a parochial club is that it gives to the head of the club the inestimable help of the vicar's wisdom and experience in difficult cases ; that is, of course, where the vicar possesses these most valuable qualities.

CHAPTER VII

DISCIPLINE AND ORDER

“ They who govern most make least noise.”

THERE are many difficulties connected with this most important subject. When we begin club-work we are often afraid we shall offend and perhaps lose some of our members by enforcing obedience to rules. Many years of experience convince us that girls much prefer strict rather than lax discipline in their club.

A visit to a club on one of its festival days will show at once if there is good discipline in it or not. We once visited a club where the annual social and prize-giving were taking place. When the moment arrived for the distribution of badges the voice of the lady who had kindly come to present them could scarcely be heard above the babel of voices. The club-leader repeatedly rang the bell, but no notice was taken of it. If these girls had been accustomed, on their ordinary club nights, to observe the rule of silence when the bell was rung, this want of order would not have occurred at their social.

It ought, except as a signal for closing, to be unnecessary to ring a bell, but when it is rung, instant silence should be the result. The mortification of the unfortunate club-leader is very great when such disorder and discourtesy take place, because enjoyment is impossible under such circumstances.

We ought to close with absolute punctuality, and never begin to play the hymn-tune until there is perfect silence. If there is any want of reverence on the part of new members during the hymn and the prayer, say at the conclusion, "I think So-and-so," naming the offender, "must have forgotten that our LORD is just as much present here in our club-room as He is in church, and that we have been singing this hymn to Him." Some such little reminder answers much better than to treat it merely as a breach of discipline, although, if the bad behaviour is continued, we must send the offender summarily out of the club. She, as a matter of course, will say, "I shan't come no more," when we can explain how little we desire her presence until she can learn to behave herself. An apology will, nearly always, be made the next day. This trying habit of giggling comes chiefly from nervousness, but unless we treat it with severity the girl will never learn to control herself. No habit is more intensely aggravating or more calculated to upset the peace of the club.

If we begin from the very first with strict

discipline, we shall have no trouble, with, for instance, our Sunday class. The great thing is to have our eyes on the girls when giving a lesson, instead of reading or referring to our notes. Girls object most strongly to anything like a read lesson ; their criticism on it is always, " She kept her eyes on a book all the time, so there didn't seem to be anything interesting in it." It is strange that they have this feeling about a read lesson, for they like a story read to them, although even the latter would strike them more if told.

The consideration of manners comes in with that of discipline. In this respect we can do much for the girls, and they are rarely offended at our plain-speaking, and even if they are at the moment, when they are older they will thank us for it.

Such little discourtesies as not looking at a person when shaking hands, allowing any one to stand and speak to them while they themselves remain seated, going out of a room before an older person, never saying, " Thank you " for what is done for them, not saying " Good-night " when leaving, can easily be dealt with at the club. It is tiresome to have to correct the same fault perhaps a dozen times, but it is really worth while for the sake of the girls.

The most difficult habits, we find, for our girls to acquire are those of noticing and attending to the wants of others, and of saying " Thank you " for trouble taken for them, or for benefits

conferred upon them. The lack of both courtesies comes from want of thought ; they take everything as a matter of course, and some of them feel an awkward shyness about expressing their gratitude. It is probably what some of us felt as children when, after being given a present, our mother whispered in our ear, " Now, dear, thank your kind aunt." We cannot suggest that the girls should thank *us*, but we can, in the case of the other workers, ask, " Did any of you thank Miss —— for taking you for that nice expedition ? " or, " Have you thanked Miss —— for playing for you all this evening ? "

In many of the girls' homes these little refinements are unknown, so we have to teach them. We felt well repaid for our trouble, after two years' attempts to get a very rough little girl into shape, when she left for service in a good place, her mistress remarked on her nice manners and refined ways. The great secret is not to pass over any want of manners, but to speak about it at once to the girl—if possible, by herself. With a certain sort of girl, the remark, " Such behaviour is not very lady-like, is it ? " will at once bring about amendment, especially with regard to loud laughing and talking in the street. We cannot be too careful to insist on the girls dispersing very quietly after the club is over. It is not an easy matter, especially with a large number of girls.

We need order in the smallest details connected with the club. As we write these words

we are guiltily conscious that our own club cupboards sadly need what an old Irish char-woman called "regulating." She used to say, "I am going to regulate the kitchen drawers to-day." We shall find it necessary to spend some hours in imitating this dear old woman's example. I have seen cupboards and libraries which were a reproach to all connected with the management of the club. The committee should be largely responsible for the arrangements. It answers fairly well to make one committee member responsible for the care, arrangement, and covering of all the club music; another for the library; another for the games; and another for the theatrical wardrobe of the club. The head of the club will, however, have to look into these various departments from time to time, see that lists are made of the various properties, that they are carefully mended or covered, and that missing library books are brought back. We should be particular about having all music and books of plays covered in brown paper, otherwise they continually come to pieces and are lost, and much money is wasted on renewing them.

We should not allow music, Indian clubs, dumb-bells, drill-dresses, or theatrical costumes to be borrowed by the girls, as there is always a difficulty in getting them back until weeks or even months have passed by; and in the case of clothes there may be risk of possible infection in the girls' homes.

There is, we think, little to add about the library to what we said in our former book. It is a great boon to be able now to buy Rosa Carey's stories for sixpence or for fourpence-halfpenny each, as the girls are so fond of them, and, if bound in cardboard and linen, they will last for years. A few of the more intelligent among our club-girls delight in the late Dr. Neale's historical stories, and in some of Crake's Church history tales, which are quite worn out by reading and re-reading, notably, *The Abbot of Glastonbury*. We must be comprehensive in our choice of books on account of the great variety of tastes among the girls. One girl of twenty will delight in reading the simplest stories by Hesba Stretton, while others will ask for the novels of Marie Corelli and of Hall Caine, which we have no intention of adding to our library. Edna Lyall's stories still keep up their popularity, and lately, *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* and *Lovey Mary* have been much in favour. We find that the younger girls as a rule read more than the elder.

A great deal of looking forward is required for both theatricals and social evenings. The chief secret of avoiding worry is to make all our arrangements, down to the smallest details, well in advance, and to note down on paper everything that will be required. For social evenings the refreshments for a large number of people—from ninety to a hundred—need cost but little. Lemonade can be bought in four-

penny-halfpenny packets, and can be made into a syrup—three packets will be more than sufficient, and the syrup needs only to be diluted, sweetened, and stirred with a spoon—and cakes are a cheap commodity. All arrangements as to where hats and coats are to be placed, where the actors are to dress, and how the washing-up of the glasses is to be managed should be settled upon beforehand.

If electric light is used for the footlights a fireman is required to attend by the municipal authorities. We cannot be too careful to guard against possible dangers. Lighted Japanese lanterns are by no means safe, and should never be used. If we are not quite certain that the floor of our room is safe for dancing, we should have it tested. We continually hear of many sad accidents which a little forethought might have prevented, and we are responsible for those whom we invite to spend their evenings with us.

On the night of the performance we must be sure to arm ourselves with quantities of safety-pins, hair-pins, needles, and cotton. Each girl's clothes should be marked with her name and put in a separate place, otherwise there will be wild confusion when the performers come to dress. Spare books of the play for the prompters should always be brought, as the performers usually forget to bring their books. The boys who are to manage the curtain, and those who are to sell the programmes should be chosen in advance, and the tickets and bills should be out

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a fortnight before the entertainment takes place.

All these little details are the merest commonplace to the experienced worker, but we are sometimes glad of a little advice when we are beginners.

CHAPTER VIII

COMPETITIONS, SOCIALS, AND OUTDOOR GAMES

"It is a low benefit to give me something ; it is a high benefit to enable me to do something of myself."

GIRLS are very changeable, and very wanting in perseverance, so we shall often find it hard to keep up their interest in the club. The last three or four months of the year, when the club has re-opened after the summer holidays, are as a rule the most satisfactory. The girls enter upon all the amusements provided with great keenness, and they begin to look forward and to prepare dialogues or plays for their Christmas social. If we are impecunious, it will probably be necessary to start the autumn with the learning of a play in order to earn some money for the up-keep of the club. This play will also be found most useful for the diversion of the Sunday School or of the Band of Hope at Christmas. A play is the means most commonly resorted to when it is necessary to revive failing interest in the girls. It is no mark of a successful club, but quite the reverse, when the greater

part of the year is devoted to theatricals, thereby showing a failure to interest the girls in solid and useful employments. The test of a good club is when there is no entertainment or treat of any kind going on, and yet when the attendances show no diminution.

It is very hard to achieve this, and many of us often feel in despair at the immense difficulty of interesting the girls in industrial employments, or in inducing them to persevere in learning to do any one thing really well, as, for example, drill or singing.

In many of our large towns this difficulty has been successfully met by the organising of competitions in various subjects.

In any of our smaller towns where these are not already started it would be a good thing if some club-leader would try to set a similar organisation on foot in humble imitation of "The London Girls' Club Union."

As a preliminary step all club-leaders in or near the particular town should be called upon and invited to a meeting where the aims and objects of such a Union will be explained. Some person who is a good speaker and interested in work with girls should be invited to speak, but *not* the club-leader who gets up the meeting. She should remember that "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country." We should try and make this meeting as friendly and informal as possible; and we should have afternoon-tea after it is over. The

points for discussion are chiefly these: "The benefits of such a Union," "The Regulations," and "The Subjects for Competition."

We can have competitions in drill, singing, drawing, painting, writing, plain needlework, knitting, crochet, essays, recitations, etc. If the meeting is held in the autumn, the competitions should take place in the spring of the following year, perhaps in April or in May.

Besides encouraging industrial work of all kinds these competitions have also a moral value. They do much to prevent girls becoming conceited, for, when their powers are tried against those of others, the girls are surprised to find that where they thought they excelled in some particular direction they are, in fact, easily beaten. It is a great thing when girls learn to take failure good-humouredly and to congratulate those who have surpassed them. When we hear from the lips of a disappointed drill-team or choir, "It is a shame," "It isn't fair," "Well, I'll never go in for anything again," we may be sure that a good moral influence is lacking in that club.

There are in these competitions drawbacks, just as there are in everything else, and these come in when emulation and desire to excel become too great; then jealousies creep in, and unfair, and even dishonourable things are occasionally done by club-leaders who are over-anxious for the success of their club in the competition. We should remember that a

victory, won by the very slightest unfairness, ceases to be a victory at all. Every one is injured by it, the girls, the workers, the Competition Union, and, most of all, the erring club-leader herself.

It is not easy to create an *esprit de corps* among girls, but these competitions do much towards its attainment. The certificate which is awarded to the club showing the best average of work in any subject is eagerly coveted for framing and hanging up in the club-room. The girls who work for these competitions are tremendously keen, and what would have formerly been considered dull work, and certainly not persevered in, is now carried to a successful issue.

All this work for competition adds, very materially, to our expenses, so we ought to be strict about the weekly penny. Every girl can pay this except when she is out of work, when we shall be obliged to let her payment stand over. Nearly every club-leader has difficulties in getting the girls' subscriptions. It is most unfair to allow the conscientious, honest girls to pay for their less scrupulous sisters, for that is what it comes to when, again and again, certain girls—not always the poorest—"forget," as they say, "to bring their subscriptions." The best means of compelling these debtors to pay up speedily is to give out that, at the next social or summer outing, no one whose subscription is unpaid will be invited. The response, we have found, is exceedingly prompt.

We now come to the consideration of an amusement about which some people still differ, namely dancing. At many meetings connected with clubs, especially in the provinces, this old objection continues to be brought forward. It is said that if we have dancing at the club we shall lead the girls to frequent doubtful places in order to dance. The reverse is the truth: if we give our girls dancing in their clubs, they will not go to dancing saloons. As a friend of mine, a woman of great experience, once said, "The question is not, Are the girls to dance?—they will dance whether we like it or whether we do not—but the question is, *Where* they are to dance: are they to get their dancing in some low public house, or hall, or with us?"

We cannot bring girls along the way of life in leading-strings, but we can teach them to see the difference between safe and doubtful amusements, and to use their will and their common-sense to keep from the latter. It is as natural for them to dance as it is for their brothers to play football. The latter amusement is sometimes beset by temptations to gambling, yet we do not forbid football to our boys.

The abuse of a thing is no reason for its disuse, and a stronger type of character will be produced in those who learn to use in moderation all that is in itself right and innocent.

Some think that if we are to keep a straight course we must imitate the puritans of old, yet, if we do, our poor, repressed, starved human

nature will break the unnatural bonds we have bound around it, and probably burst forth into excesses of various kinds.

For the benefit of inexperienced club-leaders we must touch upon the club socials to which the girls so eagerly look forward. The most important one will be that held at the beginning of the New Year. Our social is arranged thus: We have a sit-down tea at 6 p.m.; at its conclusion little gifts are distributed to each girl, or they are given through the medium of a bran-tub or a fish-pond. These gifts need only cost a very small sum apiece, and they give great pleasure to the recipients—that is, if they have been taught to value a gift for the kind thought of which it is the expression rather than for its money-value. Once when we were visitors at a club social we were surprised to hear the girls openly express their discontent at the presents they received.

After tea we adjourn to the dancing room, where we play games or dance until our guests arrive at 8 p.m. (Each girl is allowed to invite one guest on these occasions.) At 8.15 we begin our entertainment, which consists of dialogues, plays, and songs. We find that the evening is more enjoyed if we have some amusement besides dancing for a part of the time. After our entertainment is over, and while all are still seated, refreshments are handed, and then the vicar gives away the prizes for the Bible-class attendances and for excellence in the secular

classes. After the prizes have been presented the names of those who are to receive their club-badges and their cards of membership are read out, and they come up to receive them. The girls should wear these badges on ribbon of the club-colour on all important occasions. After this distribution we dance until 10.30 p.m., when the party breaks up. It is important to have several programmes of the dances put up in various parts of the room, and to adhere strictly to their order, otherwise there may be pauses, and many differences of opinion among those who are in favour of one dance and those who are in favour of another. If the evening is to be a success, it must go with a swing, and there should be no awkward gaps in the programme. We must not allow the accomplished dancers to have it all their own way in the matter of waltzes, but we must also have country-dances for the uninitiated. Some very shy young men are willing to try "Sir Roger de Coverley," although terrified at the bare idea of a round dance.

It is quite pathetic to hear from the girls how such evenings as these are looked forward to, and their recollection treasured up afterwards. These socials are also excellent opportunities for meeting any of our old girls who have married, and the parents of the girls, who thus learn something of what the club is doing for their daughters.

With regard to the much discussed question

of inviting young men to dance with the girls, we should say that, if the girls wish it, those young men belonging to the church whose characters are known to the clergy should be asked. We are always afraid of asking each club-girl to bring her brother or some young man friend with her, as is the custom in many clubs, for fear of the girls making bad acquaintances. It is said that there is no more risk in a dance of this kind than there would be in a dance in a different class of life of making doubtful acquaintances, but there is this very great difference—that girls in a higher class are much more looked after and protected as to their men acquaintances than their working sisters are. The parents of the latter would say: "If you met the young fellow at your club-dance, he *must* be all right or he wouldn't have been invited"; and perhaps some girl might come to harm through an acquaintance made at our club-dance, which would be a sad responsibility for us. However good and nice your girls may be, it by no means follows that their brothers are the same. In the case of a girl who is engaged to a young man with the sanction of her parents, she may be asked to bring him to all the club socials. Very often she will not accept our invitation for him, because she will tell us candidly, "I'm afraid he might perhaps take up with some other girl," a remark which would show no great faith in her lover. In one club the girls said they enjoyed themselves more

without the young men, so we left off asking them. It is sometimes not easy to persuade a large number of the young men connected with the church to come, because many of them cannot dance, and, as they say, "they do not like making fools of themselves." This difficulty can be obviated by a few of the club-workers holding one or two dancing-classes for the young men. We are quite sure that these dances are very good for the men as well as for the girls.

A question which is often asked is, "Should a club be closed for a time once a year or not?" We have tried keeping our club open all through the summer (it happened to be a very wet and cold season), and also of closing it for July and August, and we find that the latter plan answers best. It really is unfair to the club-workers not to give them a long rest; and although the girls grumble a good deal when the club closes, they come to it with renewed zest when it re-opens. We think that it is most important for the Bible-class to be open all the year; it forms a great means of keeping the girls together. The summer, too, is the time when they are most tempted to become slack about their religious duties and to get into frivolous ways, and often into bad company. If it is at all possible, we should try, once a week, to take all who like to go for a country walk. The girls can play rounders and have skipping, and for a long afternoon and evening out some buns and

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bananas will quite satisfy them by way of a meal.

Much more might be done in the matter of organising open-air games for the girls. Some clubs have cricket or hockey once a week ; some have a regular evening at the swimming-bath. Whatever games we decide upon, do let us arrange something for our girls during the long summer months when we ourselves, perhaps, travel or go for a series of delightful country visits. We have in our mind the girls who belong to country and seaside clubs rather than London girls. Most of the latter go for a fortnight to some Holiday Home or other. Those who live out of town rarely get any change at all. It should not be hard to find girls in our own class of life who will willingly give up an hour or two a week to teach their working sisters the games which they themselves spent so much time in learning at school.

CHAPTER IX

OUR JUNIORS

"Trees, while they are still young, can be more easily made to stand upright, and can be bent and trained by the gardener."

OUR juniors are, as we well know, the hope of the club. All our best and most steadfast club members first came to us at the age of fourteen. It makes all the difference in the world to a girl if she becomes a member of a club at the age when her character is forming, or if she does not become a member until the age of seventeen or eighteen, when her character is, to a great extent, already formed. Girls who join at the latter age rarely make satisfactory members, while on the other hand, those who come to the club young, look upon it as a part of their life, and regard the workers with lasting affection, because they have been familiar with them almost from their childhood.

For these reasons, and many more, it is wise to form a junior section of the club. From ten to fourteen, or from twelve to fifteen, are good

ages for the juniors. Between the ages of twelve and fourteen they particularly need looking after, as then they are just growing out of childhood; and as we walk about the streets around the club we shall have many opportunities of checking and correcting rude, bad behaviour before these habits have taken a deep root. We have a strong hold over children of these ages if we have a club for them, because they enjoy coming to it, and the rules and the club etiquette which we should at once begin to instil into their minds do much to civilise and to improve them.

A children's club is much easier to manage if those over thirteen have a separate time or evening. They do not mix well with the smaller children.

Once, or at the most twice, a week is quite often enough for the juniors to meet. The time that suits them best is between half-past five and half-past seven. The choice of amusements for the evenings will depend upon the numbers coming, and upon the resources open to us. A large number of children are difficult to manage unless we have drill, singing, or needlework for the whole class. One evening for drill and singing, and another for table games, painting, or needlework seems to answer well. They always like a needlework class, but the buying of the materials is a heavy drag on the funds of an impecunious club, and a drill teacher is not always to be obtained.

The learning of a fairy-tale play gives the greatest possible enjoyment. We need many helpers if we have a large number of children, as they are inclined to be noisy, restless, and sometimes quarrelsome with each other. The difficulty of managing them is much increased if the children are of a rough class.

It is well to have half an hour's interval between the departure of the juniors and the arrival of the seniors. Make a strict rule that the juniors, when dismissed, go away at once from the club, and do not play round the doors, thus annoying the senior girls.

With regard to the serious difficulty of persuading them to go straight home afterwards, we cannot do more than see their mothers, and give them a card with the days and times written out when the club is open. Many of the parents allow their children to play in the streets until nearly nine o'clock, and sometimes much later. We can only warn the mothers how terribly harmful these late hours spent in the street are for the children, and we can do no more.

We should sometimes tell our juniors what a privilege it will be when they are old enough to join the senior club, and thus teach them to look forward to the attaining of the great age of fourteen. The workers who are responsible for the senior girls should be responsible also for the juniors, as by this means much friction and want of unity will be avoided. Many of

us have had experience of the harm brought about by the existence of strained relations between the head of the children's club and the head of the senior girls' club. Vicars generally make a rule that, at a specified age, the little girls are to be moved up into the older club, and then the trouble begins. The head of the juniors objects to losing them, and perhaps does not approve of Sister A.'s or Miss B.'s methods. The juniors, naturally, do not care about leaving their older friends and being transferred to strangers, so they come up to the senior club unwillingly, and with no liking for those who will be over them—sometimes, indeed, they are even set against them by having caught (little pitchers having long ears) some echo of the unkindly feeling expressed against those who have to do with the senior organisation. We have known this arrangement actually end in the starting of a rival club, and a second girls' guild, with a chaplain other than the vicar in the same parish. This was an attempt to please every one made by those in authority, and as we may imagine, it was far from being a cause of unity in that parish. After some years it was seen what a mistake had been made, and one of the guilds was dissolved. In some cases we have known the success of the senior club seriously jeopardised by the refusal of the head of the juniors to allow them to leave her section of the club, though they had arrived at the proper age to do

so. All these difficulties and unpleasantnesses would never have come about if the helpers of both senior and junior divisions had worked together. Where this is done everything works smoothly, and the club is a centre of unity instead of discord in the parish, and it is a club for *all* the girls belonging to the church, and not only one for Miss A.'s or Miss B.'s girls.

With regard to the mixing of different ages, we must explain to our seniors how important a club is for girls of fourteen who have just begun going out to work, and that we shall look to them to help these younger girls by their good example and by their influence. We should, if possible, have a separate room for girls over eighteen, where they can talk quietly if they wish to do so. We think that the dislike they often express to mixing with the "kids," as they call them, is really far more theoretical than actual. The older girls often do good to the younger ones, and *vice versâ*.

If the juniors have a class on Sundays connected with the club, we should on no account have them with the seniors. The latter really do dislike them at their class, and it is impossible to give lessons which are suitable for both ages. It is a good thing to ask some of those among the elder girls, upon whom we can depend, to help with the juniors. They will be proud of being asked to help, and will do their very best.

When our junior girls leave school the question of their future employment comes to the front.

Mothers should be advised to send them to work immediately on leaving, as a long interval of idleness often undoes the good effects of their schooling. If the girls are going to service, we should do our best to persuade the mothers to let them sleep at their places. The chief reason why so few girls go to service is that up to the age of sixteen or seventeen most of the mothers obstinately refuse to let them go out except by the day. The result is that, when these girls are asked to go into regular service after having enjoyed the freedom of their evenings for a long time, they refuse to give them up, and either continue to go out as daily drudges, or drift into factories. The less sensible mothers prefer their girls going out to daily work for several reasons: firstly, because they would have to give them good underclothes if they were out altogether; secondly, because they have a much more secure hold over the girls' wages, and the few weekly shillings they bring in is a help towards the housekeeping.

If these mothers would but think of the ultimate good of the girls, they would not act thus. We have known many girls of fourteen and fifteen go wrong, because, after leaving their place about six or seven o'clock, they would spend the rest of the evening in the streets, not returning home until ten or even later. The mothers were too idle and indifferent to ascertain for themselves when the girl really

left her place, until at last the talk of the neighbours as to the girl's "goings-on" compelled her to make inquiries, and then it was too late to do more than place the delinquent in some home for bad girls.

Another objection to this sleeping at home is that there is often a large growing-up family, and the girl, owing to the very limited accommodation, may have to sleep in a room with quite big brothers, or with her parents, and this just at the age when most care should be taken about such matters. Even in a house which possesses three bedrooms we shall find that one of them is very often occupied by a lodger. We might help to remedy this evil by speaking to the mothers about such things; often there is simply want of thought on their part. A woman will say apologetically, "You see, we was brought up rough-like; but now you puts it to me, I see 'tain't quite the right thing now she is getting a big girl." A working-girl told us that this is the root of much of the terrible sin into which girls fall.

When a child first goes to service great care should be taken about her place, for the first start is all-important. If the girl becomes a little half-starved drudge, she will, at the first opportunity, throw up service in disgust. A nice place with kind people will give a girl a good impression of service, and she will probably become in later years an upper servant in a good class of family.

Sometimes we are too much inclined to look upon service as a kind of elysium for girls, and also as a haven of safety for them. Large places with a number of servants have sometimes been found to be hotbeds of iniquity, when the upper servants have been immoral and drunken. The master of the house may know nothing of what is going on below stairs, or he may remain wilfully ignorant of it rather than trouble himself to put matters right. Any poor girl who finds herself in such a position is indeed to be pitied. The dangers and temptations of factory life are as nothing to those which now surround her. There may not be one upright servant in the household, and it is almost impossible for a young girl to keep, unaided, in the right path. We know from penitentiary statistics how large a number of bad girls come from the class of domestic servants. Generally a smaller place is safest for a girl, because the servants are so much more under the supervision of the mistress.

The subject of service leads us to consider the question of giving or lending money to buy outfits. We can guard against possible dishonesty in several ways. If the girl's home happens to be a bad one, we should not leave any clothes there, but send them to the girl's place after she has arrived. We should also draw up a written statement, which she should sign, empowering the employer to pay us a fixed sum out of the girl's wages until the cost of the

outfit is paid. We also stipulate that if the girl leaves her place through her own fault in less than three months, the clothes are to be returned. These precautions are really necessary if we have many girls to help ; and if this plan is insisted upon for all, there will be no unpleasant feeling about it among them. We must explain that the club-money is the property of *all* the club-members, and that we are responsible for any advance from these funds being repaid. We knew of one mother who, failing to persuade the club-leader to leave her daughter's outfit at her home, actually took the girl from her place in service after three days, in order to get hold of the clothes. She failed in doing so, and the clothes were removed from the situation before the girl had left it.

With regard to the learning of various trades, the right time to start these is when a girl first leaves school. Large linendrapers' shops are glad to take them at this age, and those who begin thus early in business places rarely have much difficulty in finding employment when their apprenticeship is over. It is hard to persuade the parents that the learning of a trade comes the cheapest in the end, even though for a year or two the girls bring in very little money towards the household expenses.

We ought to find out all that we can about women's employments ; and if we find a capable girl wasting her time and energies on some unsuitable kind of work, we should try and

place her in some different position. We remember one such girl who was doing daily housework in a small tradesman's family. Her parents considered that service was beneath her, chiefly because she would have to wear a cap! As the girl herself was quite willing to go to service, and wished to do better work, we obtained an introduction for her to the matron of one of the large London infirmaries, and she became in time an excellent nurse, only leaving to be married. The change which the discipline and training wrought in this girl was wonderful. Another of our girls did equally well at a provincial hospital, and another was successful as a cottage nurse.

The healthiest kind of work is, on the whole, good service, for the large factories are, in spite of all the modern sanitary precautions, happy hunting-grounds for the microbes of various diseases. Two of our own London girls, workers in a large factory, have already fallen a prey to the scourge of consumption.

We have only touched on the fringe of this many-sided subject, but it is one about which we can be continually learning more year by year.



CHAPTER X

HEALTH

"Thou chiefest good !
Bestow'd by Heaven, but seldom understood."

GREAT responsibility rests on all who collect girls together in a club-room. Our duty is twofold: to see that the room is sanitary, and to assist in the preservation of individual health. It is sad to see how little people, more especially religious people, realise their responsibility in these matters—in many cases they absolutely ignore it. Many parish-rooms and institutes are dirty and ill-ventilated. We have several times heard in such rooms as these a health lecturer holding forth with the greatest earnestness on the terrible danger of dust to the lungs, whilst she stood upon incredibly dirty boards, and around her on the top of every window-ledge and cupboard dust lay inches thick. Some of her girl listeners remarked the state of the room with manifest amusement. One of the best ways of keeping the floor clean is to have it covered with linoleum,

as it can then, so easily, be washed over. If we have boards, we should see for ourselves how they are scrubbed. Once, after remarking on the extreme dirt of the floor of a club-room, we were assured that it had been scrubbed all over only the day before. On further inquiry the scrubbing proved to have been performed with a brush with few remaining bristles, cold water, and no soap! We must also see that window-ledge and tops of cupboards are kept clean, otherwise all the dust upon them is inhaled by the unfortunates in the room who, in this way, may contract consumption and other lung diseases. This evil is accentuated when the girls dance, as all this dust is then set in motion.

Windows, thick in dust, obscure the light, and thus aid the development of tubercle germs, which flourish exceedingly in gloom and darkness. The lighting of club-rooms is of great importance, as headache and eye-strain result if the illumination is defective. Incandescent gas is probably the most satisfactory and the cheapest mode of lighting a room.

It is our duty to see that all lavatories in connection with the club are kept clean and are in good order, thus preventing typhoid fever and diphtheria. It fell to our lot, many years ago, to be given a girls' class in a large hall where all the parish organisations were held. It was a hot summer, and most unpleasant smells were wafted in at the windows. On investigation they were found to emanate from

the lavatories in the basement. Every one was suffering from the nuisance, but the curate, then in charge of the Sunday school, did not like to speak, and the teachers thought it was "not quite a nice subject to mention to the vicar." When we insisted that formal complaint should be made to headquarters, the matter was seen into, and after some time put right. It was fortunate that this was done, as quite soon there was a severe outbreak of diphtheria in the town. This happened a long time ago, and now such carelessness about the health of those under our charge, and such false modesty, have largely, but by no means entirely, disappeared.

The proper ventilation of club-rooms is of the greatest importance. In many instances Church people seem positively to enjoy an atmosphere which may almost, to use a homely but expressive phrase, be cut with a knife : that poisonous air in which consumption thrives and infects the healthy. We should always leave the windows of our club-room open at the top ; and if we have to use the room immediately after the departure of another class or club, we should leave all the doors and windows wide open for ten minutes in order to get a thorough draught through. As a general rule it never seems to occur to the last person using the room to open the window. Any one who has had the misfortune to hold a club meeting immediately after a large Band of Hope will

long to inculcate in all workers a desire for ventilation. Workers are often surprised to find how done up they feel after their club evenings. The want of fresh air is largely responsible for this lassitude. It is quite easy to teach young people to like fresh air, and the girls will soon be insistent in asking for open windows.

Arrangements should be made for the storage of wet umbrellas and cloaks, if possible outside the club-room, so that damp and mud are not introduced into it. If meals are arranged at the club, we should see that the food is wholesome, and that a supply of pure water is provided, and that all the crockery used is properly washed up after use with clean tea-cloths.

Besides these measures for the general health of the club, it is necessary also to attend to personal health.

In the first place we club-workers must remember how much better work we can do if we keep in good health. If we are fagged and run down, the whole tone of the club will become depressed. We cannot be bright and cheery if we are feeling dead-tired; therefore, unless we are abnormally strong, we should lie down for an hour after our midday meal on the days on which our club meets. This hour's rest makes a great difference in what we are able to do in the evening, and it also gives us time to read. If we go out before and after breakfast, in the afternoon, and finally to our club, from which

we return late at night, we shall soon break down, for it is far too much even for the strongest person.

Many workers shorten their lives and limit their powers of work by not taking proper meals. We shall find that afternoon-tea, at 4.30 p.m., and then no further meal until we return from our club, is not at all a sensible plan, for we need a good meal to sustain us through all the strain of the long evening. A good meat-meal (not a bun and a cup of tea) before we start for our club will do much to keep us in good health. When we feel unduly worried and perplexed by difficulties in our work, we should spend a long day in the country. If we cannot do this, a day spent in reading a good novel may help to put us right. Should neither remedy prove efficacious, we must go away for a few days. When we begin to have sleepless nights, when everything seems to irritate us, and when we cannot get some particular worry off our mind, we are overstrained, and if we do not take care we shall begin to suffer from "nerves." Change is to us a complete cure. As soon as we are but three stations from home we find that we have left our bothers behind us; and sight-seeing always puts new life into us.

We do not always take exercise when we ought. We remember, at one of the late Father Dolling's retreats, the perceptible start among his audience when he gave out dogmatically that "taking exercise is just as necessary as

saying our prayers"; and it was impossible to repress a smile when he told us to often ask ourselves, "Is my digestion good?" He showed us very forcibly that much of our inability, both for prayer and work, was due to the preventable weakness of our bodies through our own want of common-sense and crass ignorance of the laws of health. Every club should have an annual course of health lectures. They are easily obtained from a County Council lecturer, from a local Health Society lecturer, from a doctor, or from some matron or nurse, and the girls always seem to enjoy these lectures.

With regard to the health of the girls much may be done by a little observation and sensible advice. We should notice the coming on of that dread enemy of girls—anaemia. If they can be persuaded to be much in the open air and to take exercise and nourishing food, they may ward it off. Sometimes a few weeks' rest in the country or at the seaside will prevent a serious illness; and we should keep any convalescent letters that may be given us for cases such as these. Insufficient food, want of fresh air and of out-door exercise are great factors in producing this ailment. It is very sad when a girl falls ill who has no home or relations to befriend her. In such a case she will naturally look to her club to lend her a helping hand. The girls themselves are often most generous in getting up a collection for their sick mate.

Another insidious disease common to girls is hysteria, symptoms of which are the making up of the most extraordinary lies, thieving, and accusing themselves of imaginary crimes, usually against morality. Girls afflicted with this disease show an utter want of self-control, and have a very excited, nervous manner. No one who has not had sad experience would credit what is often said and done by such girls. Hysteria is unfortunately very difficult to detect in its early stages, and terrible harm is often done in a club before the source of the trouble is discovered. When we find that a girl persistently tells lies and makes up fictions about herself, we should be on our guard, and unless she can be cured she should be asked to leave the club. In very bad cases it becomes almost insanity. Few club-leaders will escape the trial of having one at least of these girls at some time in her club. Even if the lying comes from disease rather than from wilful sin, it is no less dangerous for all with whom the girl is associated. Sometimes these girls, who are often extraordinarily clever, will, if we expel them from our club, go to some young clergyman, who has had perhaps little or no experience with girls, and pour into his ears most pathetic fictions about her life, and persuade him to take her part. One of the greatest difficulties in club-work comes from having to deal with these afflicted girls, but unfortunately, when we are inexperienced workers, we do not know or under-

stand much about such cases. The clergy are not all gifted with common-sense and experience with regard to girls, and they sometimes, with the kindest intentions, do them much harm. They allow the girls to come to them again and again with interminable stories about themselves and other people, and give them sympathy when they need the bracing treatment of a sharp scolding.

We are sometimes, very wrongly, cheered by hearing of our neighbours' misfortunes. Many club-leaders have suffered, even more severely than we have, through these girls. We have heard of several instances when, through false accusations, such girls have got their club-mates into serious trouble. They have even been known to write slanderous letters about the ladies who work in their club, and so cleverly have these been written that they have been taken seriously and inquired into. Anonymous letters are, of course, a common weapon used by these girls.

The extraordinary thing is that, not only clergy, but Sisters, are often deceived by cases of this kind. One especial mark of hysteria is a warping of the mind on the moral side, and consequently such a girl's conversation can only be described as corrupting in the extreme.

Can we do nothing to prevent girls falling victims to this disease? All healthy occupation of mind and body, ordinary care to keep in health, outdoor exercise, and above all, the

learning of self-control, will help to keep the foe at bay.

We have known a girl fall full length on the ground, when out for the day, groaning and shuddering, and apparently unconscious, so that her companions rushed up to us with the startling announcement, "We think that Harriet is dying." We took her hands and shook her gently, and told her sternly to get up at once and not to be so silly. She at once got up, and we saw that there was nothing whatever the matter with her. The same girl would suddenly burst into fits of weeping in church until she was forbidden to come any more, when she speedily cured herself.

Want of self-control lies at the root of these imaginary faints and fits of crying. In one case it was found that apparently bad epileptic fits were only a form of hysteria. We see how valuable physical drill and gymnastics must be in teaching girls self-control and obedience to orders.

These are unpleasant subjects to think about, but we must not allow ourselves to ignore anything that may help us in the tremendous responsibility which rests on all who have anything to do with the training of the young.

CHAPTER XI

MORAL TEACHING

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power."

HERE we are indeed approaching a difficult subject, and one on which we can only speak usefully after many years' experience of work with girls.

We are all aware that an appalling amount of bad talk goes on amongst a large number of girls. This would not be so hard to deal with if it were like a weed which grows up in the night and can be pulled up root and all the next morning quite easily, because it is of such recent growth. This corrupt talk is the fruit of evil learnt and practised far back in the days of childhood. We have spoken of the importance of the junior Girls' Club; this is one of the reasons, because between the ages of twelve and fourteen they are developing in mind and body, and awaking to consciousness of the facts of life.

A large number of mothers give their children no sort of teaching or explanation of the facts

of life, thus leaving them to find them out for themselves through the medium of very undesirable talk with other children of their own age. It is then that the harm which bears such evil fruit in years to come is so easily sown.

If we suggest to a mother that she should begin to teach her girl what it is necessary for her to know we are met by various objections, such as, "Well, I never told her sisters nothing, and they got on all right"; or, "Bless you, miss, 'tain't no manner of use me telling her nothing, she's as sharp as a needle, and the children learns one another them kind of things." These speeches represent, of course, very ignorant ways of regarding, or rather of ignoring, parental responsibilities, but of the truth of the latter speech we shall, alas, find out by experience. It is quite heart-rending to know how much evil quite small girls learn from one another.

Many girls tell us that if their mothers had explained the simple facts of life to them in a good and wholesome way, they would not have been tempted to listen to this kind of talk. Right knowledge is the best cure for evil curiosity. It is impossible to keep the children of the poor in ignorance of the facts of life, as all the circumstances of their lives are entirely different from those of upper-class children. They are precociously familiar with the incidents of birth, sickness, and of death. In knowledge of life they are at nine or ten years of age a good four or five years older than their carefully guarded

and shielded little sisters of the upper class. Therefore it follows that mothers, in order to protect their children from possible evil at school or in playtime, should very early give them simple moral teaching ; at the same time warning them, very seriously, against listening to what other children might say on these subjects, and also to come to her if they wanted to know anything more.

Then a very real difficulty, and one which we all feel, finds expression in, "I shouldn't know how to speak to my little girl about such things ; I shouldn't know in the least how to put it." Some very wise books have been written on these subjects. The first one is called *A King's Daughter* ; it costs only one penny, and is the very thing to give to the mothers of our junior girls. We should impress upon them that these books are not to be given away, but that they are only for the mothers to help them to teach the children what they ought to know. This little book is very simple and excellent in every way, and when we first read it, we thought what a good book it would be to give to our girls at their Confirmation. Our further experience taught us that there were several objections against doing this ; first of all, most girls leave everything about, and these books are not intended to fall into the hands of the boys of the family. The other objection is that a badly disposed girl will turn the most innocent words on this subject to a bad use ; that is the especial

danger of written or printed words on this subject. One short line of warning in this book, so carefully worded that it could not teach any one evil who was previously ignorant of it, was picked out by a girl from a bad home and pointed out to the others who had also received the book, with the question, "Do you know what that means? I can tell you." We just mention this to show how very, very careful we must be in giving away written or printed matter on this subject, otherwise we shall bring about the very evil we want to warn them against.

We know the text, "To the pure all things are pure"; but certainly the converse is true also, "To the impure all things are impure." Such will see in the most beautiful pictures only evil, and in the most innocent remark a double meaning will be discovered.

We find that the safest course is to ask any girl whom we feel needs such teaching to come and see us, and then we can let her read the book while she is with us, and if she wishes to ask anything about what she has read, she can do so. (In the next chapter, p. 125, of this book the author's address where these books can be obtained is given.)

There is an unfortunate mistake which is sometimes made in dealing with these matters: we forget that the characters of these girls are as diverse the one from the other as the flowers in a garden. If we were to treat every plant alike, we should kill a good many, and we should

obtain but a weakly growth from many others. Yet, in spite of this well-known fact in nature, many teachers ignore it entirely in the training of their human plants. We have known boys and girls perfectly horrified and disgusted by the moral teaching dealt out in precisely the same measure to each. We have heard them say, "Oh, why was I told all this? I didn't know it before, and I didn't want to either." Or, "It's just putting temptation in a lad's way, I call it." The well-intentioned teacher would probably reply, "Forewarned is forearmed."

Now, young people of the same age differ in an extraordinary way the one from the other. One is precocious, the other is child-like in every sense of the word; the one is guilty in thought and deed, the other is innocent in thought and deed; the one, owing to his home surroundings, is old in his knowledge of evil, the other is carefully guarded in his home from evil by good parents. We shall make sad mistakes if we treat them both alike. Then comes the great difficulty: "How shall I know when it is necessary to speak and what to say?" First and foremost we must ask, before we speak and as we speak, for the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT; then we must study the character of the girl—sometimes we can read a great deal in a girl's face. The very expression will tell us much of good or of evil. We can ask any girl to read *A King's Daughter* with profit, and when she has read it, she will, very likely, open out to us if she is in any trouble

about having joined in bad talk, or having read a bad book. Just before their Confirmation is a good time to ask the girls to come and have a talk with us ; but let us beware of often speaking to them on these subjects. With most of us there will be little fear of our speaking too much on such subjects ; our temptation will be to put off the evil hour until it never comes at all. Yet it is a terrible responsibility if, in later life, any of these girls go wrong. We should feel, " Well, perhaps if I hadn't been such a coward about warning her of possible danger, she might have kept straight." This consideration may perhaps brace us up to speak.

We were once asked to introduce a girls' purity society into our club. Each girl was to wear a special badge, and once a month talks were to be given by one of the club-workers to all the girls assembled together. We felt that badges symbolical of purity might possibly cause that supreme virtue to be evil spoken of, and that the subject is one which is best spoken of individually, otherwise it leads to much discussion afterwards among the girls. It is far from being necessary to give talks on this subject many times in the year, and the speaker, unless very experienced and prudent, might do a great deal of harm. Purity is like humility in this way : the more it is examined, and analysed, and dragged into the fierce noon-day light, so much the more does it begin to disappear.

We cannot teach the girls too often that the

human body is sacred, because it has been made the temple of the HOLY GHOST in Baptism; because GOD the SON took to Himself human nature and was born of a Virgin Mother; because these bodies of ours will rise again, and because we live always in the Presence of GOD. We might suggest that they should, if they are in doubt as to whether an action is sinful or not, ask themselves, "Should I like to do this if my LORD JESUS CHRIST were visibly standing by me, as He is in truth standing now invisibly by me?"

Is not this teaching sufficient? We used to think that it was, but now we fear it is not. Many girls fall into sinful habits in their childhood through ignorance, and have to struggle for years unsuccessfully against them in consequence of that ignorance. It is possible to warn in such a way that if a girl has fallen into evil of this kind, she will at once understand our meaning; but if she is innocent, she will heed our warning without understanding its necessity.

It is most important never to admit into the club any girl who has lost her character. It seems hard-hearted to make such a rule, but experience has taught us that apparently no fallen girl can keep her disgrace to herself. She will tell it first to one of her companions and then to another, so that in a very short time every one knows that a girl who has gone wrong is a member of the club. This does much harm, as it lowers the girls' standard of purity, and

induces talk on these subjects. Once we admitted one such girl without knowing anything of her past life. When we found out what that past had been, we told her that, if she ever spoke of it to the other girls, she would have at once to leave the club. In spite of this warning she talked freely of her sad fall, and so we had to expel her from the club.

We are responsible for the girls who spend their evenings with us, and it would be sad indeed to think that they had gained their first knowledge of evil from companions whom they met at the club. It is almost impossible to believe a word that these bad girls say—they cannot speak the truth, and all sense of honour seems dead in them—so we must not let the pity and compassion which we feel for them lead us to alter our rule about their non-admission to the club. It is often possible to find some kind person with whom they can spend their evening out, although, if possible, they ought only to be allowed out in the afternoon.

We should be most careful as to the nature of the books and songs which may be brought into the club, more especially if our girls are of a rough class. Bad books are a great evil, as they are lent from one to another. We knew of a girl of thirteen who went to the house of a school companion to read secretly an abominable book written against nunneries. We remember once hearing of a middle-aged man who said, "I would give the best years of my life not to

have read a certain bad book when I was young. Whenever I want to pray or to meditate, the evil which I once learnt from that book comes between my soul and God, and even suggests itself to me at the most sacred moment of Communion." We can but warn the girls, and suggest that they should ask themselves, when they begin to read, "Should I like my Master to look over my shoulder and to read that book with me?" We should also warn them against reading the newspaper reports of the cases in the divorce courts. We remember meeting a girl employed at one of our large factories and saying, "We hope you do not read about that horrible divorce case which is going on now?" She replied, "Oh yes, I do; the girls here talk about nothing else."

Girls should be taught to avoid looking at, and taking pleasure in, the vulgar, and often worse than vulgar post-cards displayed in the shop windows. They should learn that the power of religion is to be exercised in the custody of the eyes—"Turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity"—and to the ears, that they may be deaf to impure talk. We must also remind them, whenever it is needed, that their behaviour in the streets should be quiet and modest, and that they must be careful not to attract attention by loud laughing and talking. Some girls will walk along a street in such a way that every man who passes will stare at them, or speak to them. Such girls as these will

make acquaintance with any sort of men, and unless they can be persuaded to give up these ways will, in a short time, swell the ranks of the bad girls. We must keep our eyes open, and observe indications of a girl having started on the downward path, and then pray constantly for her, warn her, write to her, and use every means to save her. We should try and keep in touch with her, however hopeless she seems, for the friendship of her "club-lady" may be the last slender thread which still binds her to virtue.

In all towns there is some place where the young people of both sexes "promenade," as they call it, in the evening, and in such places there is generally a sprinkling of bad characters. The time when this walk is most dangerous to our girls is on Sunday evening. We have, therefore, more chance of keeping them straight if our class is held in the evening than in the afternoon. If it is held at the earlier time, we do not know where the girls may be in the evening. Many clubs now open on Sundays from four in the afternoon till church-time, and after church-time till 10 p.m.

A great encouragement to perseverance in our work is the knowledge that so few club-members go wrong; at least, that has been our own experience. Twice, when going over large penitentiaries, we have asked the girls if they have ever belonged to a Girls' Club, and we have been always answered in the negative.

Some of the girls asked us, "What is a Girls' Club?" and when we told them, some have said sadly, "It might have made all the difference to me if I had spent my evenings at some place like that." Wrong-doing generally comes from making bad companions, going to doubtful places of amusement, and a mind which is vacant of any thoughts except of dress and of young men. If we can persuade girls, when they are young, to join a club, they will, nearly always, prefer the innocent amusements they can enjoy there to those that are dangerous and bad.

Our teaching about purity must not be simply negative. We do not want the minds of our girls to be like gardens where all the weeds are pulled up, but where nothing is planted in their stead. We must try to plant interests of all kinds in the girls' minds, remembering St. Paul's words, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

CHAPTER XII

USEFUL INFORMATION

WHEN starting a club we shall need a card of membership drawn up somewhat as follows :

Name of Club

[Blank space for the member's name to be inserted.]

Objects

1. Perseverance in the faith and practice of the Church.

2. To help by prayer, example, and personal effort in bringing other girls into the fold of CHRIST's Holy Church.

(Or, in the case of an undenominational club) :

1. Perseverance in leading a good life.

2. To try and influence other girls to lead Christian lives.

The Club Motto

The Prayer

Times of Club Meetings

Rules or Recommendations

1. To attend church and Bible-class every Sunday.

2. To subscribe a penny a week to the club funds.

(Or, for an undenominational club) :

1. To attend a place of worship and Bible-class every Sunday.

Suggested Rules for a Club Guild

1. To say prayers kneeling night and morning.

2. To go to church every Sunday, and to keep Good Friday religiously.

3. To communicate once a month after careful preparation.

4. To attend the Guild meetings.

BOOKS USEFUL FOR TEACHING

"The Faith of the Church." By Rev. W. B. Trevelyan. 1s. 6d. (National Society.)

"The Children's Faith." By Bishop Osborne. 2s. (Longmans.)

"The Simple Guides to Religious Knowledge." 1s. net each. (Longmans.)

"Catholic Faith and Practice." 7s. 6d. (Longmans.)

"The Oxford Library of Practical Theology." 5s. (Longmans.) Especially, "Religion," "The Church Catechism," "Prayer,"

"Scripture Text-books for Children." 8*d.* each. (Rivington.)

"Handbooks to the Bible." 2*s.* 6*d.* each. (Rivington.) Especially those on the Pentateuch and S. Matthew.

A good Catechism for the girls to learn by heart is, "A Catechism of Faith, Duty, and Grace." 2*d.* each, or 50 for 7*s.* (W. Knott.)

"Church Teaching for Young People" series. 2*s.* each. (Nisbet.)

"The Church's Object Lessons." 2*s.* 6*d.* (Mowbray.)

"Neale's Church History for Children." 1*s.* 6*d.* (Mowbray.)

"The Sunday Portfolio." 3*s.* (Mowbray.)

"The Holy Eucharist ; Sacrifice and Feast." Penny Library. (Mowbray.)

"Definite Church Teaching." 1*d.* (Mowbray.)

"Our Private Prayers." 1*d.* (Mowbray.)

"Footprints of the Son of Man." 3*s.* (Longmans.)

"Notes on the Lord's Prayer." 1*d.* "The Shield of Faith" (Instructions on the Creed). 1*d.* "The Sevenfold Gift ; its Nature and Purpose." 1*d.* (Richard Jackson.)

BOOKS FOR THE GIRLS

"My Prayers" (excellent for the Unconfirmed). 1*d.* (Mowbray.)

"The Christian's Handy Book of Prayer." 1s.
(Longhurst.)

"The Pilgrimage." 4d. (Mowbray.)

"The Guide to Heaven." 1s. (Longmans.)

"The Churchman's Penny Library" Series.
(Mowbray.)

"The Holy Eucharist." 1d. (Mowbray.)
Contains the service, with a few simple private prayers for those who are present without communicating.

"A Girl's Difficulties." 6d. (Wells Gardner.) A nice little book of advice to girls.

"The King's Daughter" Series, recommended in Chapter XI., are to be obtained from Mrs. Hill, Christchurch Vicarage, Pendlebury, near Manchester. The first two numbers of the series are 1d. each, or 10d. a dozen (postage 2d. extra); the third one costs 2d. a copy.

"A Book of Prayer for Busy People." 3d.
(Mowbray.)

BOOKS USEFUL FOR READING ALOUD TO GIRLS

"The Gordon League Ballads," Series I and 2.
2s. 6d. each. (Skeffington.)

"That Land and This." 1s. 6d. (Mowbray.)

"Agathos and Other Stories." 1s. (S.P.C.K.)

"Parables from Nature." "A Child's Book of Saints." "Legends and Lyrics." (Adelaide Proctor.) 1s. each, in "Everyman Series."

"Martyrs and Saints of the First Twelve Centuries." 5s. (S.P.C.K.)

"True Stories of Faithful Friends."
(S.P.C.K.)

"The Hidden Servants." 6s. (Nutt.)

All the books by Dr. Neale, published by the S.P.C.K., are excellent for teaching Church History.

"A Book of Golden Deeds." 6d. (Nelson.)

BOOKS ON HEALTH AND SANITATION

"The Way to be Well." 4d. "A Healthy Home and How to Keep it." 4d. (2 vols.)
"How to Nurse in Our Homes." 4d. (Wells Gardner.) "Simple Hints on Nursing." 6d.
(S.P.C.K.)

A FEW BOOKS USEFUL FOR WORKERS

"Personality and Power," by Canon Walpole.
2s. 6d. (Hodder & Stoughton.)

Miss Soulsby's books, especially "Stray Thoughts on Character," "Stray Thoughts for Mothers and Teachers," "Stray Thoughts for Girls," and "Stray Thoughts on Reading." These are 2s. 6d. each. A book of collected papers by the late Susan S. Soulsby is very wise and sensible; it is called, "Home is Best." 1s. All these are published by Longmans.

No worker should be without "The Englishwoman's Year-Book" (2s. 6d. Black), as it

contains lists of Convalescent, Holiday, and Residential Homes for Girls, and much other useful information.

BOOKS OF PLAYS AND DIALOGUES

"Our Girls' Book of Plays," Parts I. and II. 4d. each. (Wells Gardner.)

"Dialogues, Duologues, and Monologues." By M. H. Debenham. 1s. 6d., or 3d. singly. (Wells Gardner.)

"New Plays for Girls." 1s. (Wake and Dean.)

"Every Day Dramas," especially Numbers 28, 30, and 41. ½d. each. (Church of England Temperance Society, Westminster.)

Mrs. Trebeck, Leith House, Leatherhead, has also written some good plays for girls; "The Lady Doctor" is one of the best of these.

The Fairy Tale Plays issued in the "Books for the Bairns," 1d. each, are admirable. The penny edition contains the music of the songs in sol-fa. "The Slave of the Lamp," "Dick Whittington," "Beauty and the Beast," "The Sleeping Beauty," and "Cinderella," are all suited for big girls to act. They can be obtained from *The Review of Reviews* Office, 39-40, Whitefriars Street, London. The pianoforte edition of the music is published by Egerton & Co., 115, Strand, London.

If operettas are required rather than plays,

the lists of Messrs. Curwen and of Messrs. Novello should be consulted.

SOCIETIES FROM WHICH GRANTS OF BOOKS CAN BE OBTAINED

Rebecca Hussey's Book Charity, Norfolk House, Victoria Embankment, London. This society allows the books to be chosen from any publisher. It is intended to give grants of instructive books only, but standard novels may be selected if desired. The club is expected to pay five or ten shillings towards the grant.

The S.P.C.K., Northumberland Avenue, London. Only books published by the Society are granted.

The Kyrle Society, 2 Manchester Square, London, W., gives grants of second-hand books to poor clubs.

The Tract No. 5, called "Girls' Clubs," published by the National Union of Women Workers, which contains a list of London Girls' Clubs, should be procured. It costs 2d., and can be obtained at Parliament Mansions, Victoria Street, London, S.W.

For help in organising a Club Union for Competitions the magazine of the London Girls' Club Union should be procured from the Hon. Maude Stanley, 59, Greek Street, Soho, London.

All information about the working of the Factory Girls Country Holiday Fund can be obtained from Miss Canney, St. Peter's Rectory, Saffron Hill, Hilborn.

DIFFICULT PROBLEMS

There are various opinions as to the best way of helping a girl to regain the path of virtue. If a girl is very depraved a Home is a necessity for her, as it would not be right to send her to service without a long probation. Often, too, the only chance for these poor girls is the restraint and isolation from the world which the two years' probation in a Home gives. The training in cleanliness and order is most valuable for the many girls who come to such a Home uncivilised and untaught in the simplest domestic matters. Religion, more especially in the Homes managed by Religious Communities, is most carefully taught, and in many cases for the first time in the lives of these girls they come under religious influence and are brought to penitence. If on the other hand a girl has fallen for the first time, she often does best in service, in a place where there are no children and no other servants, and where the mistress knows that she desires to redeem her character. The situation should be found for her far removed from her former temptations, and where some lady living near will be willing

to befriend and teach her, and to put her under the spiritual guidance of some experienced priest. Often the same lady will also be able to find a trustworthy older woman in the girl's own class of life who will be a companion to her, and try to help her to keep straight. Many working women are longing to do work for our LORD, and what work can be more blessed by Him than the helping of a fallen sister to walk upright? We have been able to follow the career of some girls so dealt with for many years, and the result has been most satisfactory. They have kept straight, and remained in the same places for years. Great care must be exercised in the choice of places for them. If they go as general servants, there is no chance of their doing harm to their fellow-servants, and it is best that they should not be with children. We have never forgotten the late Father Dolling's solemn warning in this matter. He said that again and again he had known of terrible sins among persons in the higher classes of society which they traced back to the corrupting influence of the nurse or under-nurse in whose care they were placed as children.

Sometimes benevolent people are so anxious to help these poor girls that they forget what an awful risk it is to let them have the care of children. This side of the question should be more considered than it is. For example, charitable ladies have been known to send girls who have lived bad lives to spend their holidays

at some Working Girls' Holiday Home with no word of warning as to their characters. Supposing such girls had been admitted, and that respectable girls had been harmed by associating with them, would these people who sent them ever be able to forgive themselves?

Another case when it is often desirable not to send a girl away is when she has a child living. The thought, often so strong to influence aright, "you must be good for the sake of your little one," loses its power during the two years of separation. If the girl is in service, she can see her child at least once a month, and the responsibility and discipline of having to support it out of her wages do much to steady and restrain her. We have often seen how wonderfully the love of the poor fallen mother for her child raises and ennobles her. (This point is very beautifully brought out in Mrs. Gaskell's story of "Ruth.")

We should like to see a greater number of Homes for different classes of girls—more Preventive Homes, Permanent Homes for the feeble-minded (and so many of these girls are feeble-minded)—provided by the State; Cottage Homes for small numbers of girls and Homes where the mothers can be with their children until fit for service. The whole question of penitentiaries is beset with difficulty. The devotion and self-sacrifice of the Sisters and workers must win admiration from all, yet it is possible in every sort of work to get into

grooves, and so some of these penitentiary systems have become crystallised, and require modernising and revising. An ideal Home would be where six or at the most eight girls were taken, and where they were permitted to talk rationally at meals, and whenever their work would not be harmed by such distraction. Those over them would then quickly find out who could be trusted and who could not, and so a far truer estimate of their characters could be formed than by the silence system, which also leads to so much deception on the part of the girls, for talk they will with eyes, on fingers, or by silent movements of the lips. Then perhaps gardening could be substituted sometimes for washing clothes: GOD's fresh air and the smell of mother earth are wonderfully purifying influences.

These girls in Homes especially need healthy occupation of the mind. If they could have properly taught classes in dressmaking, drill, singing, handicrafts, or evening school for reading and writing, arts of which many have a very faulty knowledge, great good would be done. It is often said that these girls will make evil out of anything, even out of the simplest games; perhaps this may be because their minds lie fallow, except for evil thoughts which flourish apace.

Some will say that we must not forget, or lead the girls to forget, by making the Homes too attractive, that they are in a penitentiary.

If we take the analogy of a hospital, which we make bright and cheery, and where we try to divert the thoughts of the sufferers from their diseases as much as possible, surely we should try to do the same with the hospitals for sin-stained souls and the patients themselves. After they have once been led to seek of their own free will pardon through the Precious Blood in the Sacrament of penance, their hearts should be rightly full of joy.

A few large Homes are arranged on the cottage system, each under the care of a Sister and lady worker. These are, we are told, much more successful in securing individual knowledge of the girls and also in making their surroundings more home-like.

We have devoted some space to this subject, because of its extreme importance, for outside our club-girls' circle we are bound to meet with some who will need either sending to a Home, or being very carefully looked after in service away from their former temptations. Do not let us act hurriedly, but with caution and common-sense. We remember a person once saying, "I wonder if you benevolent ladies have any idea what a tremendous responsibility you are taking upon yourselves when you so lightly alter the whole circumstances and environment of a fellow-creature's life, you, in fact, constitute yourselves little providences." Sometimes, even after a fall, a girl's own home, if she has a wise mother, will be her regeneration, sometimes the com-

plete break of life in a Penitentiary will be needed, sometimes service will be best. We often see, in cases of widows left with little children, how thoughtlessly people scatter the children into orphanages when much less expense would really be incurred, if a small sum could be collected to set the woman up in some sort of work, and prevent her little home from being broken up. It is these natural affections and family ties, consecrated by religion, which are GOD'S way of bringing up children, so wherever possible we must try to save these from being broken.

Another subject that we have to consider in work with girls is Temperance. Many club-leaders introduce a branch of the C.E.T.S. into their club, or a White Ribbon Band. Once we had a branch of the first-named society in one of our clubs. It was not very satisfactory: all the girls who had no temptation to drink, and who were already teetotalers, became members attracted by the brightly coloured card of membership and the medal. Those who needed it did not join. We have not found that the better class-girls find drink a temptation, but the laundry girls do, and taking the pledge is sometimes a help to them. We cannot warn our girls too often against drinking between meals, and also that they should make a rule of one glass at their dinner and no more, and never be persuaded to break it when a festive occasion occurs.

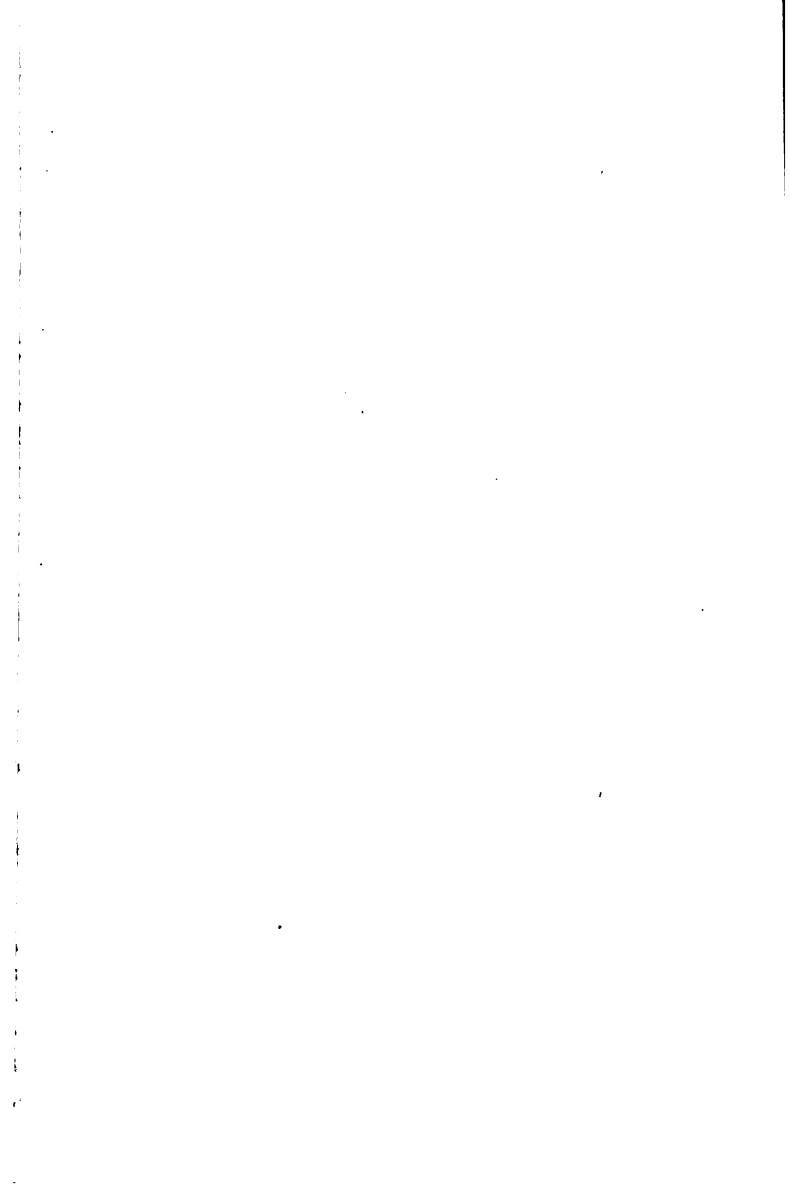
We were talking to a priest greatly experienced in the care of inebriates, and he said that the root of drunkenness was the refusal to bear the cross in any shape or form, either in loneliness, sorrow, anxiety, or pain. We cannot warn girls sufficiently not to fly to alcohol in depression of spirits or pain. Any girl who has drinking parents should be pressed to take the pledge on account of the great danger of hereditary tendencies to drink. We think that sensible warnings will do more good than indiscriminate taking of the pledge, because we have to remember that alcohol is a good gift given us by GOD, and it is man's abuse of the gift that is wrong, and by no means the gift itself.

One of the saddest signs of the times is the immense number of suicides that take place among quite young people. We must remind our girls that suicide is self-murder, and an insult to the Creator. It has been said that where clear and definite teaching is given as to the future life suicide is rare, so we must not neglect that.

Then, where it is necessary, girls should be taught that destruction of life in its early stages is murder, and a sin which will surely bring down GOD's anger upon the offender. A great many quite young girls hear this sin made a matter of conversation at their places of work, and are informed about it, to their shame be it said, by the married women who work with

them. We must remember that we have to do with those who are shielded from no sort of moral evil, so we must not ignore these unpleasant subjects, but try to forewarn those who are surrounded by so many temptations.





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